

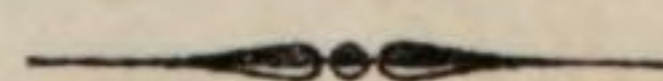
WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE'S
M A C B E T H

DRAMA IN FIVE ACTS.

WITH NOTES ORIGINAL AND SELECTED

BY

SAMUEL WELLER SINGER, F. A. S.



HALLE 0/S.

PRINTED FOR C. R. KERSTEN.

ORIGINALLY S. SCHMERBER'S PUBLICATION IN FRANKFORT O. M.

[47]

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DRAMA IN FIVE ACTS

THE FIRST PART OF THE TRAGEDY OF MACBETH, AS PERFORMED BY THE ACTORS OF THE KING'S COMPANY, IN THE SWAN THEATRE, UNDER THE MANAGEMENT OF JAMES WATTS, ESQ. IN THE YEAR 1662.

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MACBETH.

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M A C B E T H.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

DR. JOHNSON thought it necessary to prefix to this play an apology for Shakspeare's magic;—in which he says, 'A poet, who should now make the whole action of his tragedy depend upon enchantment, and produce the chief events by the assistance of supernatural agents, would be censured as transgressing the bounds of probability, be banished from the theatre to the nursery, and condemned to write fairy tales instead of tragedies.' He then proceeds to defend this transgression upon the ground of the credulity of the poet's age; when 'the scenes of enchantment, however they may be now ridiculed, were both by himself and his audience thought awful and affecting.' By whom, or when (always excepting *French* criticism), these sublime conceptions were in danger of ridicule, he has not told us; and I sadly fear that this superfluous apology arose from the misgivings of the great critic's mind. Schlegel has justly remarked that, 'Whether the age of Shakspeare still believed in witchcraft and ghosts, is a matter of perfect indifference for the justification of the use which, in *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, he has made of preexisting traditions. No superstition can ever be prevalent and widely diffused through ages and nations without having a foundation in human nature: on this foundation the poet builds; he calls up from their hidden abysses that dread of the unknown, that presage of a dark side of nature, and a world of spirits which philosophy now imagines it has altogether exploded. In this manner he is in some degree both the por-trayer and the philosopher of a superstition; that is, not the philosopher who denies and turns into ridicule, but, which is still more difficult, who distinctly exhibits its origin to us in apparently irrational and yet natural opinions.'—In another place the same admirable critic says—'Since *The Furies* of Aeschylus, nothing so grand and terrible has ever been composed: The Witches, it is true, are not divine Eumenides, and are not intended to be so: they are ignoble and vulgar instruments of hell. They discourse with one another like women of the very lowest class; for this was the class to which witches were supposed to belong. When, however, they address *Macbeth* their tone assumes more elevation: their predictions have all the obscure brevity, the majestic solemnity, by which oracles have in all times contrived to inspire mortals with reverential awe. We here see that the witches are merely instruments; they are governed by an invisible spirit, or the operation of such great and dreadful events would be above their sphere.' Their agency was necessary; for natural motives alone would have seemed inadequate to effect such a change as takes place in the nature and dispositions of *Macbeth*. By this means the poet 'has exhibited a more sublime

picture to us: an ambitious but noble hero, who yields to a deep laid hellish temptation; and all the crimes to which he is impelled by necessity, to secure the fruits of his first crime, cannot altogether eradicate in him the stamp of native heroism.' He has therefore given a threefold division to the guilt of that crime. The first idea comes from that being whose whole activity is guided by a lust of wickedness. The weird sisters surprise Macbeth in the moment of intoxication after his victory, when his love of glory has been gratified; they cheat his eyes by exhibiting to him as the work of fate what can only in reality be accomplished by his own deed, and gain credence for their words by the immediate fulfilment of the first prediction. The opportunity for murdering the king immediately offers itself; Lady Macbeth conjures him not to let it slip; she urges him on with a fiery eloquence, which has all those sophisms at command that serve to throw a false grandeur over crime. Little more than the mere execution falls to the share of Macbeth; he is driven to it as it were in a state of commotion, in which his mind is bewildered. Repentance immediately follows; nay, even precedes the deed; and the stings of his conscience leave him no rest either night or day. But he is now fairly entangled in the snares of hell; it is truly frightful to behold that Macbeth, who once as a warrior could spurn at death, now that he dreads the prospect of the life to come, clinging with growing anxiety to his earthly existence, the more miserable it becomes, and pitilessly removing out of his way whatever to his dark and suspicious mind seems to threaten danger. However much we may abhor his actions, we cannot altogether refuse to sympathize with the state of his mind; we lament the ruin of so many noble qualities; and, even in his last defence, we are compelled to admire in him the struggle of a brave will with a cowardly conscience.—The poet wishes to show that the conflict of good and evil in this world can only take place by the permission of Providence, which converts the curse that individual mortals draw down on their heads into a blessing to others. Lady Macbeth, who of all the human beings is the most guilty participator in the murder of the king, falls, through the horrors of her conscience, into a state of incurable bodily and mental disease; she dies, unlamented by her husband, with all the symptoms of reprobation. Macbeth is still found worthy of dying the death of a hero on the field of battle. Banquo atones for the ambitious curiosity which prompted him to wish to know his glorious descendants by an early death, as he thereby rouses Macbeth's jealousy; but he preserved his mind pure from the bubbles of the witches: his name is blessed in his race, destined to enjoy for a long succession of ages that royal dignity which Macbeth could only hold during his own life. In the progress of the action, this piece is altogether the reverse of Hamlet: it strides forward with amazing rapidity from the first catastrophe (for Duncan's murder may be called a catastrophe) to the last. Thought, and done! is the general motto; for, as Macbeth says,

'The flighty purpose never is o'ertook
Unless the deed go with it.'

In every feature we see a vigorous heroic age in the hardy North, which steels every nerve. The precise duration of the action cannot be ascertained,—years, perhaps, according to the story; but we know that to the imagination the most crowded time appears always the shortest. Here we can hardly conceive how so very much can be compressed into so narrow a space; not merely external events—the very innermost recesses of the minds of the persons of the drama are laid open to us. It is as if the drags were taken from the wheels of time, and they rolled

along without interruption in their descent. Nothing can equal the power of this picture in the excitation of horror. We need only allude to the circumstance attending the murder of Duncan, the dagger that hovers before the eyes of Macbeth, the vision of Banquo at the feast, the madness of Lady Macbeth; what can we possibly say on the subject that will not rather weaken the impression? Such scenes stand alone, and are to be found only in this poet; otherwise the tragic muse might exchange her mask for the head of Medusa*.

Shakspeare followed the chronicle of Holinshed, and Holinshed borrowed his narration from the *chronicles of Scotland*, translated by John Bellenden, from the Latin of Hector Boethius, and first published at Edinburgh in 1541.

Malcolm the Second, king of Scotland, had two daughters. The eldest was married to Crynin, the father of Duncan, Thane of the isles, and western parts of Scotland; and on the death of Malcolm without male issue Duncan succeeded to the throne. Malcolm's second daughter was married to Sinel, Thane of Glamis, the father of Macbeth. Duncan, who married the sister of Siward, Earl of Northumberland, was murdered by his cousin german Macbeth in the castle of Inverness about the year 1040 or 1045. Macbeth was himself slain by Macduff, according to Boethius in 1061, according to Buchanan in 1057, at which time Edward the Confessor reigned in England.

In the reign of Duncan, Banquo having been plundered by the people of Lochaber of some of the king's revenues, which he had collected, and being dangerously wounded in the affray, the persons concerned in this outrage were summoned to appear at a certain day. But they slew the serjeant at arms who summoned them, and chose one Macdonwald as their captain. Macdonwald speedily collected a considerable body of forces from Ireland and the Western Isles, and in one action gained a victory over the king's army. In this battle Malcolm, a Scottish nobleman (who was lieutenant to Duncan in Lochaber) was slain. Afterwards Macbeth and Banquo were appointed to the command of the army; and Macdonwald, being obliged to take refuge in a castle in Lochaber, first slew his wife and children, and then himself. Macbeth, on entering the castle, finding his dead body, ordered his head to be cut off and carried to the king, at the castle of Bertha, and his body to be hung on a high tree.

At a subsequent period, in the last year of Duncan's reign, Sueno, king of Norway, landed a powerful army in Fife, for the purpose of invading Scotland. Duncan immediately assembled an army to oppose him, and gave the command of two divisions of it to Macbeth and Banquo, putting himself at the head of a third. Sueno was successful in one battle, but in a second was routed; and, after a great slaughter of his troops, he escaped with ten persons only, and fled back to Norway. Though there was an interval of time between the rebellion of Macdonwald and the invasion of Sueno, Shakspeare has woven these two actions together, and immediately after Sueno's defeat the present play commences.

It is remarkable that Buchanan has pointed out Macbeth's history as a subject for the stage. '*Multa hic fabulose quidam nostrorum affingunt; sed quia theatris aut Milesiis fabulis sunt aptiora quam historiae, ea omitto.*'—*Rerum Scot. hist. Lib. vii.*

Milton also enumerates the subject among those he considered

* Lectures on Dramatic Literature, by A. W. Schlegel, translated by John Black, London, 1815, vol. ii. p. 200.

well suited for tragedy, but it appears that he would have attempted to preserve the unity of time by placing the relation of the murder of Duncan in the mouth of his ghost.

Macbeth is one of the latest, and unquestionably one of the noblest efforts of Shakspeare's genius. Equally impressive in the closet and on the stage, where to witness its representation has been justly pronounced 'the first of all dramatic enjoyments.' Malone places the date of its composition in 1606, and it has been supposed to convey a dexterous and delicate compliment to James the First, who derived his lineage from Banquo, and first united the threefold sceptre of England, Scotland and Ireland. At the same time the monarch's prejudices on the subject of demonology were flattered by the choice of the story.

It was once thought that Shakspeare derived some hints for his scenes of incantation from *The Witch*, a tragicomedy, by John Middleton, which, after lying long in manuscript, was published about thirty years since by Isaac Reed; but Malone* has with considerable ingenuity shown that Middleton's drama was most probably written subsequently to *Macbeth*.

* See the chronological order of the plays in the late Variorum Edition by Mr. Boswell, vol. iii p. 420.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

DUNCAN, King of Scotland.

MALCOLM,
DONALBAIN, } *his Sons.*

MACBETH,
BANQUO, } *Generals of the King's Army.*

MACDUFF,
LENOX,
ROSSE,
MENTETH,
ANGUS,
CATHNESS, } *Noblemen of Scotland.*

FLEANCE, Son to Banquo.

SIWARD, Earl of Northumberland, General of the
English Forces.

YOUNG SIWARD, *his Son.*

SEYTON, *an Officer attending on Macbeth.*

Son to Macduff.

An English Doctor. A Scotch Doctor.

A Soldier. A Porter. An old Man.

LADY MACBETH*.

LADY MACDUFF.

Gentlewoman attending on Lady Macbeth.

Hecate and three Witches†.

Lords, Gentlemen, Officers, Soldiers, Murderers,
Attendants, and Messengers.

The Ghost of Banquo, and several other Apparitions,

SCENE, *in the end of the Fourth Act, lies in England;
through the rest of the play, in Scotland; and, chiefly,
at Macbeth's Castle.*

* Lady Macbeth's name was Gruach filia Bodhe, according to Lord Hailes. Andrew of Wintoun in his Cronykil informs us, that she was the widow of Duncan; a circumstance with which Shakspeare was of course unacquainted.

† As the play now stands, in Act iv. Sc. 1, three other witches make their appearance.

MACBETH.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *An open Place.*

Thunder and Lightning. Enter three Witches.

1 Witch.

WHEN shall we three meet again
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

2 Witch. When the hurlyburly's¹ done,
When the battle's lost and won.

3 Witch. That will be ere set of sun.

1 Witch. Where the place?

2 Witch. Upon the heath:

3 Witch. There to meet with Macbeth.

1 Witch. I come, Graymalkin!

¹ 'When the hurlyburly's done.' In *Adagia Scotica*, or a Collection of Scotch Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases; collected by R. B. very useful and delightful. Lond. 12^o. 1668:—

'Little kens the wife that sits by the fire

How the wind blows cold in *hurle, burle swyre*.'

'i. e. in the *tempestuous* mountain-top,' says Mr. Todd, in a note on Spenser; to which Mr. Boswell gives his assent, and says, 'this sense seems agreeable to the witch's answer.' But Peacham, in his *Garden of Eloquence*, 1577, shows that this was not the ancient acceptation of the word among us: 'Onomatopeia, when we invent, devise, fayne, and make a name imitating the sound of that it signifyeth, as *hurlyburly*, for an *uprore* and *tumultuous stirre*.' So in Baret's *Alvearie*, 1573:—'But harke yonder: what *hurlyburly* or *noyse* is yonde: what *sturre ruffling* or *bruite* is that?'—The witches could not mean when the storm was done, but when the *tumult* of the battle was over; for they are to meet again in lightning, thunder, and rain: their element was a storm. Thus in Arthur Wilson's *History of James I* p. 141:—'Being in a citie not very defensible, among a wavering people, and a conquering enemy, in the field, took time by the foretop, and in this *hurlyburlie* the next morning left Prague.'

All. Paddock calls:—Anon².
 Fair is foul, and foul is fair:
 Hover through the fog and filthy air.
 [Witches vanish.]

SCENE II. *A Camp near Fores.*

*Alarum within. Enter King DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, LENOX, with Attendants, meeting a bleeding Soldier*³.

Dun. What bloody man is that? He can report,
 As seemeth by his plight, of the revolt
 The newest state.

Mal. This is the sergeant⁴,
 Who, like a good and hardy soldier, fought
 'Gainst my captivity:—Hail, brave friend!
 Say to the king the knowledge of the broil,
 As thou didst leave it.

Sold. Doubtful it stood;
 As two spent swimmers, that do cling together,
 And choke their art. The merciless Macdonwald
 (Worthy to be a rebel; for to that⁵
 The multiplying villanies of nature
 Do swarm upon him), from the western isles
 Of Kernes and Gallowglasses is supplied⁶;

² Upton observes that, to understand this passage, we should suppose one familiar calling with the voice of a cat, and another with the croaking of a toad. A paddock most generally seems to have signified a toad, though it sometimes means a frog. What we now call a toadstool was anciently called a paddock-stool.

³ The first folio reads *captain*.

⁴ *Sergeants*, in ancient times, were not the petty officers now distinguished by that title; but men performing one kind of feudal military service, in rank next to esquires.

⁵ Vide Tyrwhitt's Glossary to Chaucer, v. *for*; and Pegge's Anecdotes of the English Language, p. 205. *For to that* means no more than *for that*; or *cause that*. The late editions erroneously point this passage, and as erroneously explain it. I follow the punctuation of the first folio.

⁶ i. e. supplied *with* armed troops so named. *Of* and *with* are indiscriminately used by our ancient writers. *Gallowglasses* were heavy armed foot soldiers of Ireland and the western isles: *Kernes* were the lighter armed troops.

And fortune, on his damned quarry⁷ smiling,
 Show'd like a rebel's whore⁸. But all's too weak:
 For brave Macbeth (well he deserves that name),
 Disdaining fortune, with his brandish'd steel,
 Which smok'd with bloody execution,
 Like valour's minion,
 Carv'd out his passage, till he fac'd the slave;
 And⁹ ne'er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him,
 Till he unseam'd him from the nave to the chaps,
 And fix'd his head upon our battlements.

Dun. O, valiant cousin! worthy gentleman!

Sold. As whence the sun 'gins his reflexion
 Shipwrecking storms and direful thunders break¹⁰;
 So from that spring, whence comfort seem'd to come,
 Discomfort swells. Mark, king of Scotland, mark:
 No sooner justice had, with valour arm'd,
 Compell'd these skipping Kernes to trust their heels;
 But the Norweyan lord, surveying vantage,
 With furbish'd arms, and new supplies of men,
 Began a fresh assault.

Dun. Dismay'd not this
 Our captains, Macbeth and Banquo?

Sold. Yes;

⁷ 'But fortune on his damned *quarry* smiling.'—Thus the old copies. It was altered at Johnson's suggestion to *quarrel*, which is approved and defended by Steevens and Malone. But the old copy needs no alteration. *Quarry* means the *squadron*, *escadre*, or *square* body, into which Macdonwald's troops were formed, better to receive the charge; through which Macbeth 'carved out his passage till he faced the slave.' Thus in King Henry V. Act iv. Sc. 2:—

—our superfluous lackeys, and our peasants,
 Who, in unnecessary action, swarm
 About our *squares of battle*.'

Again, in Antony and Cleopatra:—

'In the brave *squares of battle*.'

⁸ The meaning is that Fortune, while she smiled on him, deceived him.

⁹ The old copy reads *which*.

¹⁰ Sir W. Davenant's reading of this passage, in his alteration of the play, is a tolerable comment on it:—

'But then this daybreak of our victory
 Serv'd but to light us into other dangers,
 That spring from whence our hopes did seem to rise.'

Break is not in the first folio.

As sparrows, eagles; or the hare, the lion.
 If I say sooth¹¹, I must report, they were
 As cannons overcharg'd with double cracks¹²;
 So they

Doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe:
 Except they meant to bathe in reeking wounds,
 Or memorize another Golgotha¹³,
 I cannot tell:—

But I am faint, my gashes cry for help.

Dun. So well thy words become thee, as thy
 wounds;

They smack of honour both:—Go, get him sur-
 geons. *[Exit Soldier, attended.]*

Enter Rosse.

Who comes here?

Mal. The worthythane of Rosse.

Len. What a haste looks through his eyes! So
 should he look,

That seems to speak things strange¹⁴.

Rosse. God save the king!

Dun. Whence cam'st thou, worthythane?

Rosse. From Fife, great king,

Where the Norweyan banners flout the sky¹⁵,
 And fan our people cold.

Norway himself, with terrible numbers,

Assisted by that most disloyal traitor

The thane of Cawdor, 'gan a dismal conflict:

Till that Bellona's bridegroom¹⁶ lapp'd in proof,

Confronted him with self-comparisons¹⁷,

¹¹ Truth.

¹² That is, *reports*. So in the old play of King John, 1591:—

'—as harmless and without effect

As is the echo of a cannon's crack.'

¹³ i. e. make another Golgatha as memorable as the first.

¹⁴ 'That seems *about* to speak strange things.'

¹⁵ So in King John:—

'Mocking the air with colours idly spread.

¹⁶ By *Bellona's bridegroom* Shakspeare means Macbeth. *Lapp'd in proof* is defended by armour of proof.

¹⁷ 'Confronted him with self-comparisons.' By *him* is meant Norway, and by *self-comparisons* is meant that he gave him as good as he brought, showed that he was his equal.

Point against point rebellious, arm 'gainst arm,
Curbing his lavish spirit: And, to conclude,
The victory fell on us;——

Dun. Great happiness!

Rosse. That now
Sweno¹⁸, the Norways' king, craves composition;
Nor would we deign him burial of his men,
Till he disbursed, at Saint Colmes' Inch¹⁹,
Ten thousand dollars to our general use.

Dun. No more that thane of Cawdor shall deceive
Our bosom interest:—Go, pronounce his present
death,

And with his former title greet Macbeth.

Rosse. I'll see it done.

Dun. What he hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. *A Heath.*

Thunder. Enter the three Witches.

1 *Witch.* Where hast thou been, sister?

2 *Witch.* Killing swine.

3 *Witch.* Sister, where thou?

1 *Witch.* A sailor's wife had chesnuts in her lap,
And mounch'd, and mounch'd, and mounch'd:—

Give me, quoth I:

Aroint thee¹, witch! the rump-fed ronyon² cries.

¹⁸ It appears probable, as Steevens suggests, that *Sweno* was only a marginal reference, which has crept into the text by mistake; and that the line originally stood—

'That now the Norway's king craves composition.'

It was surely not necessary for Rosse to tell Duncan the name of his old enemy, the king of Norway.

¹⁹ *Colmes'* is here a dissyllable. *Colmes' Inch*, now called *Inchcomb*, is a small island, lying in the Firth of Edinburgh, with an abbey upon it dedicated to St. Columb. *Inch* or *inse*, in Erse, signifies an island.

¹ The etymology of this imprecation is yet to seek. *Rynt ye for out with ye! stand off!* is still used in Cheshire; where there is also a proverbial saying, '*Rynt ye, witch*, quoth Besse Locket to her mother.' Tooke thought it was from *roynous*, and might signify 'a scab or scale on thee!'—Others have derived it from the rowan tree, or witch-hazle, the wood of which was believed

Her husband's to Aleppo gone, master o'the Tiger:
But in a sieve I'll thither sail³,
And, like a rat without a tail,
I'll do, I'll do, and I'll do.

2 *Witch.* I'll give thee a wind⁴.

1 *Witch.* Thou art kind.

3 *Witch.* And I another.

1 *Witch.* I myself have all the other;
And the very ports they blow,
All the quarters that they know
I' the shipman's card⁵.
I will drain him dry as hay:
Sleep shall, neither night nor day,
Hang upon his pent-house lid;
He shall live a man forbid⁶:

to be a powerful charm against witchcraft; and every careful housewife had a churn-staff made of it. This superstition is as old as Pliny's time, who asserts that 'a serpent will rather creep into the fire than over a twig of *ash*.' The French have a phrase of somewhat similar sound and import—'*Arry-avant*, away there ho!'—Mr. Douce thinks that '*aroint thee*' will be found to have a Saxon origin.

² 'Rump-fed ronyon,' a scabby or mangy woman fed on offals; the *rumps* being formerly part of the emoluments or kitchen fees of the cooks in great houses.

³ In *The Discovery of Witchcraft*, by Reginald Scott, 1584, he says it was believed that witches 'could sail in an egg-shell, a cockle or muscle-shell through and under the tempestuous seas.' And in another pamphlet, '*Declaring the damnable Life of Doctor Fian, a notable Sorcerer, who was buried at Edenborough in Januarie last, 1591*'—'All they together went to sea, each one in a riddle or cive, and went in the same very substantially, with flaggons of wine making merrie, and drinking by the way in the same riddles or cives,' &c.

Sir W. D'Avenant, in his *Albovine*, 1629, says—

'He sits like a witch sailing in a sieve.'

It was the belief of the times that though a witch could assume the form of any animal she pleased, the *tail* would still be wanting.

⁴ This free gift of a wind is to be considered as an act of sisterly friendship; for witches were supposed to sell them. So in *Summer's Last Will and Testament*, 1600:—

'—in Ireland and in Denmark both

Witches for gold will sell a man a wind,

Which, in the corner of a napkin wrapp'd,

Shall blow him safe unto what coast he will.'

⁵ i. e. the sailor's chart; *carte-marine*.

⁶ *Forbid*, i. e. forspoken, *unhappy*, charmed or bewitched. The explanation of Theobald and Johnson, '*interdicted* or under a curse,' is erroneous. A *forbadin* fellow, *Scotice*, still signifies an unhappy one.

Weary sev'n-nights, nine times nine,
 Shall he dwindle, peak, and pine⁷:
 Though his bark cannot be lost,
 Yet it shall be tempest-toss'd⁸.

Look what I have.

2 Witch. Show me, show me.

1 Witch. Here I have a pilot's thumb,
 Wreck'd, as homeward he did come. [*Drum within.*]

3 Witch. A drum, a drum;
 Macbeth doth come.

All. The weird sisters⁹, hand in hand,
 Posters of the sea and land,
 Thus do go about, about;
 Thrice to thine, and thrice to mine,
 And thrice again, to make up nine:
 Peace!—the charm's wound up.

Enter MACBETH and BANQUO.

Macb. So foul and fair a day I have not seen.

Ban. How far is't call'd to Fores?—What are
 these,
 So wither'd, and so wild in their attire;
 That look not like the inhabitants o' the earth,

⁷ This mischief was supposed to be put in execution by means of a waxen figure. Holinshed, speaking of the witchcraft practised to destroy King Duff, says that they found one of the witches roasting, upon a wooden broach, an image of wax at the fire, resembling in each feature the king's person, &c.—'for as the image did waste afore the fire, so did the bodie of the king break forth in sweat: and as for the words of the enchantment, they served to keepe him still waking *from sleepe*.' This may serve to explain the foregoing passage:—

'Sleep shall, neither night nor day,
 Hang upon his pent-house lid.'

⁸ In the pamphlet about Dr. Fian, already quoted—'Againe it is confessed, that the said christened cat was the cause of the *Kinge's majestie's shippe*, at his coming forth of Denmarke, had a *contrarie winde to the rest of his shippes* then being in his companie.'—'And further the said witch declared, that his majestie had never come safely from the sea, if his faith had not prevailed above their intentions.' To this circumstance, perhaps, Shakspeare's allusion is sufficiently plain.

⁹ The old copy has *weyward*, evidently by mistake. *Weird*, from the Saxon *wyrd*, a *witch*, Shakspeare found in Holinshed. Gawin Douglas, in his translation of Virgil, renders the *parcae* by *weird sisters*.

And yet are on't? Live you? or are you aught
That man may question? You seem to understand me,
By each at once her choppy finger laying
Upon her skinny lips:—You should be women,
And yet your beards forbid me to interpret
That you are so.

Macb. Speak, if you can;—What are you?

1 *Witch.* All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, thane
of Glamis¹⁰!

2 *Witch.* All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, thane
of Cawdor!

3 *Witch.* All hail, Macbeth! that shalt be king
hereafter.

Ban. Good sir, why do you start; and seem to
fear

Things that do sound so fair?—I' the name of truth,
Are ye fantastical¹¹, or that indeed

Which outwardly ye show? My noble partner
You greet with present grace, and great prediction
Of noble having¹², and of royal hope,

That he seems rapt¹³ withal; to me you speak not:
If you can look into the seeds of time,

And say, which grain will grow, and which will not;
Speak then to me, who neither beg, nor fear,
Your favours, nor your hate.

1 *Witch.* Hail!

2 *Witch.* Hail!

3 *Witch.* Hail!

1 *Witch.* Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.

2 *Witch.* Not so happy, yet much happier.

3 *Witch.* Thou shalt get kings, though thou be
none:

So, all hail, Macbeth, and Banquo!

¹⁰ The thaneship of Glamis was the ancient inheritance of Macbeth's family. The castle where they lived is still standing, and was lately the magnificent residence of the earl of Strathmore. Gray has given a particular description of it in a Letter to Dr. Wharton.

¹¹ i. e. creatures of fantasy or imagination.

¹² Estate, fortune.

¹³ *Rapt* is rapturously affected; *extra se raptus*.

1 *Witch.* Banquo, and Macbeth, all hail!

Macb. Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more:
By Sinel's¹⁴ death, I know, I amthane of Glamis;
But how of Cawdor? thethane of Cawdor lives,
A prosperous gentleman; and to be king
Stands not within the prospect of belief,
No more than to be Cawdor. Say, from whence
You owe this strange intelligence! or why
Upon this blasted heath you stop our way
With such prophetic greeting?—Speak, I charge
you. [Witches *vanish*.

Ban. The earth hath bubbles, as the water has,
And these are of them:—Whither are they vanish'd?

Macb. Into the air; and what seem'd corporal,
melted

As breath into the wind.—'Would, they had staid!

Ban. Were such things here, as we do speak
about?

Or have we eaten of the insane root¹⁵,
That takes the reason prisoner?

Macb. Your children shall be kings.

Ban. You shall be king.

Macb. Andthane of Cawdor too; went it not so?

Ban. To the selfsame tune, and words. Who's
here?

Enter Rosse and ANGUS.

Rosse. The king hath happily receiv'd, Macbeth,
The news of thy success: and when he reads
Thy personal venture in the rebels' fight,
His wonders and his praises do contend,

¹⁴ '*Sinel*.' The late Dr. Beattie conjectured that the real name of this family was *Sinane*, and that *Dunsinane*, or the *kill* of *Sinane* from thence derived its name.

¹⁵ The *insane root* was probably *henbane*. In Batman's Commentary on Bartholome de Propriet. Rerum, a book with which Shakspeare was familiar, is the following passage:—'Henbane is called *insana*, mad, for the use thereof is perillous; for if it be eate or dronke it breedeth madnesse, or slow lykenesse of sleepe. Therefore this hearb is called commonly mirilidium, for it taketh away wit and reason.'

Which should be thine, or his: Silenc'd with that¹⁶,
 In viewing o'er the rest o' the selfsame day,
 He finds thee in the stout Norweyan ranks,
 Nothing afeard of what thyself didst make,
 Strange images of death. As thick as tale¹⁷,
 Came¹⁸ post with post; and every one did bear
 Thy praises in his kingdom's great defence,
 And pour'd them down before him.

Ang. We are sent,
 To give thee, from our royal master, thanks;
 Only to herald thee into his sight, not pay thee.

Rosse. And, for an earnest of a greater honour,
 He bade me, from him, call thee thane of Cawdor:
 In which addition, hail, most worthy thane!
 For it is thine.

Ban. What, can the devil speak true?

Macb. The thane of Cawdor lives? Why do you
 dress me
 In borrow'd robes?

Ang. Who was the thane, lives yet;
 But under heavy judgment bears that life
 Which he deserves to lose. Whether he was combin'd
 With those of Norway, or did line the rebel
 With hidden help and vantage; or that with both
 He labour'd in his country's wreck, I know not;
 But treasons capital, confess'd, and prov'd,
 Have overthrown him.

Macb. Glamis, and thane of Cawdor:

¹⁶ i. e. admiration of your deeds, and a desire to do them justice by public commendation, contend in his mind for preeminence: he is silenced with wonder.

¹⁷ i. e. posts arrived as fast as they could be counted. 'Thicke (says Baret), that cometh often and thicke together; creber, frequens, frequent, souvent venant.' And again: 'Crebritas literarum, the often sending, or thicke coming of letters. Thicke breathing, anhelitus oreber.' Shakspeare twice uses 'to speak thick' for 'to speak quick.' To tale or tell is to score or number. Rowe, not understanding this passage, altered it to 'as quick as hail' Thus also in Forbes's State Papers, vol. i. p. 475:—'Peraventure the often and thick sending, with words only, that this prince hath lately usyd to hyr majestie, dothe somewhat molest her.'

¹⁸ 'Came post.' The old copy reads *can*. Rowe made the emendation.

The greatest is behind.—Thanks for your pains.—
Do you not hope your children shall be kings,
When those that gave the thane of Cawdor to me,
Promis'd no less to them?

Ban. That, trusted home¹⁹,
Might yet enkindle²⁰ you unto the crown,
Besides the thane of Cawdor. But 'tis strange:
And oftentimes, to win us to our harm,
The instruments of darkness tell us truths;
Win us with honest trifles, to betray us
In deepest consequence.—
Cousins, a word, I pray you.

Macb. Two truths are told,
As happy prologues to the swelling act²¹
Of the imperial theme.—I thank you, gentlemen.—
This supernatural soliciting²²
Cannot be ill; cannot be good:—If ill,
Why hath it given me earnest of success,
Commencing in a truth? I am thane of Cawdor:
If good, why do I yield to that suggestion²³
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair,
And make my seated²⁴ heart knock at my ribs,
Against the use of nature? Present fears
Are less than horrible imaginings²⁵:
My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,

¹⁹ i. e. entirely, thoroughly relied on.

²⁰ *Enkindle* means 'encourage you to expect the crown.' A similar expression occurs in *As You Like It*, Act i. Sc. 1:—

'——nothing remains, but that I *kindle* the boy thither.'

²¹ 'As happy prologues to the swelling act.' So in the prologue to *King Henry V.*:—

'———princes to act,
And monarchs to behold the *swelling* scene.'

²² i. e. *incitement*.

²³ *Suggestion*, temptation.

²⁴ *Seated*, firmly placed, fixed.

²⁵ '———Present fears
Are less than horrible imaginings.'

So in *The Tragedie of Croesus*, by Lord Sterline, 1604:—

'For as the shadow seems more monstrous still
Than doth the substance whence it hath the being,
So th' apprehension of approaching ill
Seems greater than itself, whilst fears are lying.'

Shakes so my single²⁶ state of man, that function
Is smother'd in surmise²⁷; and nothing is,
But what is not²⁸.

Ban. Look, how our partner's rapt.

Macb. If chance will have me king, why, chance
may crown me,
Without my stir.

Ban. New honours come upon him
Like our strange garments; cleave not to their mould,
But with the aid of use.

Macb. Come what come may;
Time and the hour runs through the roughest day.

Ban. Worthy Macbeth, we stay upon your leisure.

Macb. Give me your favour²⁹:—my dull brain
was wrought
With things forgotten. Kind gentlemen, your pains
Are register'd where every day I turn
The leaf to read them.—Let us toward the king.—
Think upon what hath chanc'd: and, at more time,
The interim having weigh'd it³⁰, let us speak
Our free hearts each to other.

Ban. Very gladly.

Macb. Till then, enough.—Come, friends.

[*Exeunt.*]

²⁶ By his *single state of man*, Macbeth means his *simple condition of human nature*. *Single soul*, for a simple or weak guileless person, was the phraseology of the poet's time. *Simplicity* and *singleness* were synonymous.

²⁷ '—————that function
Is smother'd in surmise.'

The powers of action are oppressed by conjecture.

²⁸ 'But what is not.' Shakspeare has something like this sentiment in *The Merchant of Venice*:—

'Where every something, being blent together,
'Turns to a wild of nothing.'

Again, in *King Richard II.*:—

'———is nought but shadows
Of what is not.'

²⁹ *Favour* is *countenance*, *good will*, and *not pardon* as it has been here interpreted. Vide *Hamlet*, Act v. Sc. 2.

³⁰ 'The interim having weigh'd it.' The *interim* is probably here used adverbially—'You having weighed it *in the interim*.'

SCENE IV. Fores. *A Room in the Palace.*

Flourish. Enter DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN,
LENOX, and Attendants.

Dun. Is execution done on Cawdor? Are not
Those in commission yet return'd?

Mal. My liege,
They are not yet come back. But I have spoke
With one that saw him die: who did report,
That very frankly he confess'd his treasons;
Implor'd your highness' pardon; and set forth
A deep repentance: nothing in his life
Became him, like the leaving it; he died
As one that had been studied in his death¹,
To throw away the dearest thing he ow'd²,
As 'twere a careless trifle.

Dun. There's no art,
To find the mind's construction in the face³:
He was a gentleman on whom I built
An absolute trust.— O worthiest cousin!

Enter MACBETH, BANQUO, ROSSE, and ANGUS.

The sin of my ingratitude even now
Was heavy on me: Thou art so far before,
That swiftest wing of recompense is slow
To overtake thee. 'Would, thou hadst less deserv'd;
That the proportion both of thanks and payment

¹ *Studied in his death* is well instructed in the art of dying. 'The behaviour of the thane of Cawdor corresponds in almost every circumstance with that of the unfortunate earl of Essex, as related by Stowe, p. 793. His asking the queen's forgiveness, his confession, repentance, and concern about behaving with propriety on the scaffold, are minutely described by that historian.' Steevens thinks that an allusion was intended 'to the severity of that justice which deprived the age of one of its greatest ornaments, and Southampton, Shakspeare's patron, of his dearest friend.'

² *Ow'd*, owned, possessed.

³ We cannot construe the disposition of the mind by the lineaments of the face. In Shakspeare's ninety-third Sonnet we have a contrary assertion:—

'In many's looks the false heart's history
Is writ.'

Might have been mine! only I have left to say,
More is thy due than more than all can pay⁴.

Macb. The service and the loyalty I owe,
In doing it, pays itself. Your highness' part
Is to receive our duties: and our duties
Are to your throne and state, children, and servants;
Which do but what they should, by doing every thing
Safe toward your love and honour⁵.

Dun. Welcome hither:
I have begun to plant thee, and will labour
To make thee full of growing⁶.—Noble Banquo,
That hast no less deserv'd, nor must be known
No less to have done so, let me enfold thee,
And hold thee to my heart.

Ban. There if I grow,
The harvest is your own.

Dun. My plenteous joys,
Wanton in fulness, seek to hide themselves
In drops of sorrow⁷.—Sons, kinsmen, thanes,
And you whose places are the nearest, know,
We will establish our estate upon

⁴ i. e. I owe thee more than all; nay, more than all—which I can say or do will requite.

⁵ 'Safe toward your love and honour.' Sir William Blackstone would read:—

Safe toward *you* love and honour;
which he explains thus:—'Our duties are your children, and servants or vassals to your throne and state; who do but what they should, by doing every thing with a saving of their love and honour toward you.' He says that it has reference to the old feudal *simple homage*, which when done to a subject was always accompanied with a saving clause—'*sauf le foy que jeo doy a nostre seignor le roy*;'—which he thinks suits well with the situation of Macbeth, now beginning to waver in his allegiance. Malone and Steevens seem to favour this explanation: but *safe* may merely mean *respectful, loyal*; like the old French word *sauf*. Shakespeare has used the old French phrase, *sauf votre honneur*, several times in King Henry V.

⁶ i. e. exuberant.

⁷ 'In drops of sorrow.'

'—lachrymas non sponte cadentes

Effudit, gemitusque expressit pectore laeto;

Non aliter manifesta potens abscondere mentis

Gaudia, quam lachrymis.'

Lucan, lib. ix.

The same sentiment again occurs in *The Winter's Tale*. It is likewise employed in the first scene of *Much Ado about Nothing*.

Our eldest Malcolm; whom we name hereafter,
The prince of Cumberland⁸: which honour must
Not, unaccompanied, invest him only,
But signs of nobleness, like stars, shall shine
On all deservers. — From hence to Inverness,
And bind us further to you.

Macb. The rest is labour, which is not us'd for
you:

I'll be myself the harbinger, and make joyful
The hearing of my wife with your approach;
So, humbly take my leave.

Dun. My worthy Cawdor!

Macb. The prince of Cumberland! — That is a step,
On which I must fall down, or else o'erleap,

[*Aside.*
For in my way it lies. Stars, hide your fires;
Let not light see my black and deep desires:
The eye wink at the hand! yet let that be,
Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see. [*Exit.*

Dun. True, worthy Banquo; he is full so valiant⁹;
And in his commendations I am fed;
It is a banquet to me. Let us after him,
Whose care is gone before to bid us welcome:
It is a peerless kinsman. [*Flourish. Exeunt.*

⁸ Holinshed says, Duncan having two sons, &c. he made the elder of them, called Malcolm, prince of Cumberland, as it was thereby to appoint him his successor in his kingdome immediatlie after his decease, Macbeth sorely troubled herewith, for that he saw by this means his hope sore hindered (where, by the old laws of the realme the ordinance was, that if he that should succeed were not of able age to take the charge upon himself, he that was next of blood unto him should be admitted), he began to take counsel how he might usurpe the kingdome by force, having a just quarrel so to doe (as he tooke the matter) for that Duncane did what in him lay to defraud him of all manner of title and claime, which he might in time to come pretend, unto the crowne.

⁹ 'True, worthy Banquo,' &c. We must imagine that while Macbeth was uttering the six preceding lines, Duncan and Banquo had been conferring apart. Macbeth's conduct appears to have been their subject; and to some encomium supposed to have been bestowed on him by Banquo, the reply of Duncan refers.

SCENE V.

Inverness. A Room in Macbeth's Castle.

Enter LADY MACBETH, reading a Letter.

Lady M. *They met me in the day of success; and I have learned by the perfectest report¹, they have more in them than mortal knowledge. When I burned in desire to question them further, they made themselves - air, into which they vanished. Whiles I stood rapt in the wonder of it, came missives² from the king, who all-hailed me, Thane of Cawdor; by which title, before, these weird sisters saluted me, and referred me to the coming on of time, with, Hail, king that shalt be! This have I thought good to deliver thee, my dearest partner of greatness; that thou mightest not lose the dues of rejoicing, by being ignorant of what greatness is promised thee. Lay it to thy heart, and farewell.*

*Glamis thou art, and Cawdor; and shalt be
What thou art promis'd:—Yet do I fear thy nature;
It is too full o' the milk of human kindness,
To catch the nearest way: Thou wouldst be great;
Art not without ambition; but without
The illness should attend it. What thou wouldst
highly,
That wouldst thou holily; wouldst not play false,
And yet wouldst wrongly win; thoud'st have, great
Glamis,
That which cries, Thus thou must do, if thou have it;
And that which rather thou dost fear to do,
Than wishest should be undone³. Hie thee hither,*

¹ *The perfectest report* is the best intelligence.

² *Missives*, messengers.

³ Thou wouldst have that [i. e. the crown] which cries unto thee, 'thou must do thus, if thou wouldst have it, and thou must do that which rather,' &c. The difficulty of this passage in *Italics* seems to have arisen from its not having been considered as all uttered by the object of Macbeth's ambition. Malone is the author of this regulation, and furnished the explanation.

That I may pour my spirits in thine ear⁴;
 And chastise with the valour of my tongue
 All that impedes thee from the golden round,
 Which fate and metaphysical⁵ aid doth seem
 To have thee crown'd withal.——What is your
 tidings?

Enter an Attendant.

Attend. The king comes here to-night.

Lady M. Thou'rt mad to say it:
 Is not thy master with him? who, wer't so,
 Would have inform'd for preparation.

Attend. So please you, it is true; our thane is
 coming:

One of my fellows had the speed of him;
 Who, almost dead for breath, had scarcely more
 Than would make up his message.

Lady M. Give him tending,
 He brings great news. The raven himself is hoarse,
 [Exit Attendant.

That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
 Under my battlements. Come, come, you spirits
 That tend on mortal⁶ thoughts, unsex me here;

⁴ 'That I may pour my spirits in thine ear.' So in Lord Sterling's Julius Caesar, 1607:—

Thou in my bosom used to pour thy spright.

⁵ 'Which fate and metaphysical aid,' &c.; i. e. supernatural aid. We find *metaphysics* explained '*things supernatural*' in the old dictionaries. 'To have thee crown'd' is to desire that you should be crown'd. Thus in All's Well that Ends Well:—

———our dearest friend

Prejudicates the business, and would seem
 To have us make denial.'

This phrase of Baret's:—'If all things be as you would have them, or agreeable to your desire,' is a common mode of expression with old writers.

⁶ 'That tend on mortal thoughts.' *Mortal* and *deadly* were synonymous in Shakspeare's time. In another part of this play we have 'the mortal sword,' and 'mortal murders.' We have 'mortal war,' and 'mortal hatred.' In Nashe's Pierce Pennilesse is a particular description of these spirits, and of their office. 'The second kind of devils, which he most employeth, are those northern *Martii*, called the spirits of revenge, and the authors of massacres, and seedsmen of mischief; for they have commission to incense men to rapines, sacrilege, theft, murder, wrath, fury,

And fill me, from the crown to the toe, top-full
 Of direst cruelty! make thick my blood,
 Stop up the access and passage to remorse;
 That no compunctious visitings of nature
 Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
 The effect, and it⁷! Come to my woman's breasts,
 And take my milk for gall, you murd'ring ministers,
 Wherever in your sightless substances
 You wait on nature's mischief! Come, thick night,
 And pall⁸ thee in the dunnest smoke of hell!
 That my keen knife see not the wound it makes;
 Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark⁹,

and all manner of cruelties: and they command certain of the southern spirits to wait upon them, as also great Arioeh, that is termed *the spirit of revenge*."

⁷ Lady Macbeth's purpose was to be effected by action. 'To keep peace between the effect and purpose,' means 'to delay the execution of her purpose, to prevent its proceeding to effect.' Sir Wm. Davenant's strange alteration of this play sometimes affords a reasonably good commentary upon it. Thus in the present instance:—

—————make thick
 My blood, stop all passage to remorse;
 That no relapses into mercy may
 Shake my design, nor make it fall before
 'Tis ripen'd to effect."

⁸ To *pall*, from the Latin *pallio*, to wrap, to invest, to cover or hide as with a mantle or cloak.

⁹ Drayton, in his *Mortimeriados*, 1596, has an expression resembling this:

"The sullen *night in mistie RUGGE is wrapp'd*."
 And in his *Polyolbion*, which was not published till 1612, we again find it:

"Thick vapours that like *ruggs* still hang the troubled air."
 On this passage there is a long criticism in the *Rambler*, No. 168; to which Johnson in his notes refers the reader with much complacency. He, however, sets out with ascribing the speech to Macbeth; and the whole of it is a puerile cavil at the *low* words with which he is pleased to say it is disfigured. So uninstructed was the lexicographer in the language of Shakspeare's age, that he takes *knife*, in the literal sense, for 'an instrument used by butchers and cooks!' Whereas quotations without end might be adduced to show that it was then a common expression for a *sword* or *dagger*. The epithet *dun* he treats with utter contempt, and says that it is 'now seldom heard but in the stable.' He did not or would not know that it was the ancient synonyme of *fuscus*, and meant no more than *dark, obscure*. Milton has represented Satan as flying 'in the *dun* air sublime;' and in *Comus* we have '*dun* shades.' At the expression '*blanket of the dark*,' he says that he can scarce check his risibility! Surely this is outraging the squeamish finicalness of the French critics in their remarks upon the poet, and need only be mentioned to excite a smile. A serious reply to such criticism would now be superfluous.

To cry, *Hold, hold!*—— Great Glamis! worthy Cawdor!

Enter MACBETH.

Greater than both, by the all-hail hereafter!
Thy letters have transported me beyond
This ignorant present¹⁰, and I feel now
The future in the instant.

Macb. My dearest love,
Duncan comes here to-night.

Lady M. And when goes hence?

Macb. To-morrow,—as he purposes.

Lady M. O, never
Shall sun that morrow see!

Your face, my thane, is as a book, where men
May read strange matters:—To beguile the time,
Look like the time; bear welcome in your eye,
Your hand, your tongue: look like the innocent
flower,

But be the serpent under it. He that's coming
Must be provided for: and you shall put
This night's great business into my despatch;
Which shall to all our nights and days to come
Give solely sovereign sway and masterdom.

Macb. We will speak further.

Lady M. Only look up clear;
To alter favour¹¹ ever is to fear:
Leave all the rest to me. [Exeunt.

SCENE VI. *The same. Before the Castle.*

Hautboys. Servants of Macbeth attending.

*Enter DUNCAN, MALCOLM, DONALBAIN, BANQUO,
LENOX, MACDUFF, ROSSE, ANGUS, and Attendants.*

Dun. This castle hath a pleasant seat¹: the air
Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself
Unto our gentle senses.

¹⁰ i. e. beyond the present time, which is, according to the process of nature, ignorant of the future.

¹¹ Favour is countenance.

¹ i. e. situation.

Ban. This guest of summer,
The temple-haunting martlet, does approve,
By his lov'd mansionry, that the heaven's breath
Smells wooingly here: no jutty, frieze,
Buttress, nor coigne of vantage², but this bird
Hath made his pendent bed, and procreant cradle:
Where they most breed and haunt, I have observ'd,
The air is delicate³.

Enter LADY MACBETH.

Dun. See, see! our honour'd hostess!
The love that follows us, sometime is our trouble,
Which still we thank as love. Herein I teach you
How you shall bid God yield⁴ us for your pains,
And thank us for your trouble.

² i. e. convenient corner.

³ 'This short dialogue,' says Sir Joshua Reynolds, has always appeared to me a striking instance of what in painting is termed *repose*. The conversation very naturally turns upon the beauty of the castle's situation, and the pleasantness of the air; and Banquo, observing the martlet's nests in every recess of the cornice, remarks, that where those birds most breed and haunt the air is delicate. The subject of this quiet and easy conversation gives that repose so necessary to the mind after the tumultuous bustle of the preceding scenes, and perfectly contrasts the scene of horror that immediately succeeds. It seems as if Shakspeare asked himself, What is a prince likely to say to his attendants on such an occasion? Whereas the modern writers seem, on the contrary, to be always searching for new thoughts, such as would never occur to men in the situation which is represented. This also is frequently the practice of Homer, who, from the midst of battles and horrors relieves and refreshes the mind of the reader, by introducing some quiet rural image or picture of familiar domestic life.'

⁴ The explanation by Steevens of this obscure passage seems the best which has been offered:—'Marks of respect importunately shown are sometimes troublesome, though we are still bound to be grateful for them, as indications of sincere attachment. If you pray for us on account of the trouble we create in your house, and thank us for the molestations we bring with us, it must be on such a principle. Herein I teach you, that the inconvenience you suffer is the result of our affection; and that you are therefore to pray for us, or thank us only as far as prayers and thanks can be deserved for kindnesses that fatigue, and honours that oppress. You are, in short, to make your acknowledgments for intended respect and love, however irksome our present mode of expressing them may have proved.'—To *bid* is here used in the Saxon sense of to pray. God *yield* us, is God *reward* us.

Lady M. All our service,
In every point twice done, and then done double,
Were poor and single business, to contend
Against those honours deep and broad, wherewith
Your majesty loads our house: For those of old,
And the late dignities heap'd up to them,
We rest your hermits⁵.

Dun. Where's the thane of Cawdor?
We cours'd him at the heels, and had a purpose
To be his purveyor: but he rides well:
And his great love, sharp as his spur, hath holp him
To his home before us: Fair and noble hostess,
We are your guest to-night.

Lady M. Your servants ever
Have theirs, themselves, and what is theirs, in compt⁶,
To make their audit at your highness' pleasure,
Still to return your own.

Dun. Give me your hand:
Conduct me to mine host; we love him highly,
And shall continue our graces towards him.
By your leave, hostess. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE VII. *The same. A Room in the Castle.*

*Hautboys and Torches. Enter, and pass over the
Stage, a Sewer¹, and divers Servants with
Dishes and Service. Then enter MACBETH.*

Macb. If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere
well

It were done quickly: If the assassination
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch,
With his surcease, success; that but this blow
Might be the be-all and the end-all here,
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time, —

⁵ i. e. we as hermits, or beadsmen, shall ever pray for you.

⁶ In compt, subject to accompt.

¹ A sewer, an officer so called from his placing the dishes on the table. *Assecour*, French; from *asseoir*, to place.

We'd jump the life to come².—But, in these cases,
 We still have judgment here; that we but teach
 Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
 To plague the inventor: This even handed justice
 Commends³ the ingredients of our poison'd chalice
 To our own lips. He's here in double trust:
 First, as I am his kinsman and his subject,
 Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,
 Who should against his murderer shut the door,
 Not bear the knife myself. Besides, this Duncan
 Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
 So clear in his great office, that his virtues
 Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against
 The deep damnation of his taking off:
 And pity, like a naked new-born babe,
 Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubin, hors'd
 Upon the sightless couriers⁴ of the air,
 Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,

² This passage has been variously explained. I have attempted briefly to express what I conceive to be its meaning:—'*Twere well it were done quickly, if, when 'tis done, it were done (or at an end); and that no sinister consequences would ensue. If the assassination, at the same time that it puts an end to Duncan's life, could make success certain, and that I might enjoy the crown unmolested, we'd jump the life to come, i. e. hazard or run the risk of what may happen in a future state. To trammel up was to confine or tie up. The legs of horses were trammelled to teach them to amble. There was also 'a trammel-net,' which was 'a long net to take great and small fowl with by night.' Surcease is cessation. 'To surcease or to cease from doing something; supersedeo, Lat.; cesser, Fr.' BARET.*

³ To commend was anciently used in the sense of the Latin *commendo*, to commit, to address, to direct, to recommend. Thus in *All's Well that Ends Well*:—

'Commend the paper to his gracious hand.'

And in *King Henry VIII.*:—'The king's majesty commends his good opinion to you.' In a subsequent scene of this play we have:—

'I wish your horses swift and sure of foot,
 And so I do commend you to their backs.'

'The pricke of conscience (says Holinshed) caused him ever to feare, lest he should be served of the same cup as he had ministered to his predecessor.'

⁴ 'The sightless couriers of the air' are what the poet elsewhere calls the *viewless winds*. Thus in *Warner's Albion's England*:—

'The scouring winds that sightless in the sounding air do fly.'
 b. ii. c. xi.

That tears shall drown the wind.—I have no spur
To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition⁵, which o'erleaps itself,
And falls on the other—How now, what news?

Enter LADY MACBETH.

Lady M. He has almost supp'd: Why have you
left the chamber?

Macb. Hath he ask'd for me?

Lady M. Know you not, he has?

Macb. We will proceed no further in this business:
He hath honour'd me of late; and I have bought
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,
Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,
Not cast aside so soon.

Lady M. Was the hope drunk,
Wherein you dress'd yourself? hath it slept since?
And wakes it now, to look so green and pale
At what it did so freely? From this time,
Such I account thy love. Art thou afraid
To be the same in thine own act and valour,
As thou art in desire? Wouldst thou have that
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,
And live a coward in thine own esteem;
Letting I dare not wait upon I would,
Like the poor cat i' the adage⁶?

Macb.

Pr'ythee, peace:

⁵ So in the Tragedy of Caesar and Pompey, 1607:—

'Why think you, lords, that 'tis *ambition's spur*
That *pricketh* Caesar to these high attempts?'

Malone has observed that 'there are two distinct metaphors in this passage. I have no spur to prick the sides of my intent; I have nothing to *stimulate* me to the execution of my purpose but ambition, which is apt to overreach itself; this he expresses by the second image, of a person meaning to vault into his saddle, who, by taking too great a leap, will fall on the other side.'

⁶ This passage is perhaps sufficiently intelligible; but as Johnson and Steevens thought otherwise, I must offer a brief explanation.—'Wouldst thou have *the crown*, that which thou esteem'st the ornament of life, and yet live a coward in thine own esteem,' &c. The adage of the cat is among Heywood's Proverbs, 1566:—'The cat wou'd eat fishe, and would not wet her feete.'

I dare do all that may become a man;
Who dares do more⁷, is none.

Lady M. What beast was 't then,
That made you break this enterprise to me?
When you durst do it, then you were a man;
And, to be more than what you were, you would
Be so much more the man. Nor time, nor place,
Did then adhere⁸, and yet you would make both:
They have made themselves, and that their fitness
now

Does unmake you. I have given suck, and know
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me:
I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums,
And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn, as you
Have done to this.

Macb. If we should fail,——

Lady M. We fail!
But screw your courage to the sticking-place⁹,
And we'll not fail. When Duncan is asleep
(Whereto the rather shall his day's hard journey
Soundly invite him), his two chamberlains¹⁰
Will I with wine and wassel¹¹ so convince¹²,

⁷ 'Who dares do more is none.' The old copy, instead of 'do more,' reads 'no more:' the emendation is Rowe's. A similar passage occurs in *Measure for Measure*, Act ii. Sc. 2:—

'———be that you are,
'That is a woman: if you're more, you're none.'

⁸ *Adhere*, in the same sense as *cohere*.

⁹ 'But screw your courage to the *sticking-place*.' Shakspeare seems to have taken his metaphor from the *screwing up* the chords of stringed instruments to their proper degree of tension, when the peg remains fast in its *sticking-place*; i. e. in the place from which it is not to recede, or go back.

¹⁰ The circumstance relative to Macbeth's slaughter of Duncan's chamberlains is copied from Holinshed's account of King Duffe's murder by Donwald.

¹¹ *Wassel* is thus explained by Bullokar in his *Expositor*, 1616: '*Wassaile*, a term usual heretofore for *quaffing* and *carousing*; but more especially signifying a merry cup (ritually composed, deckt and fill'd with country liquor) passing about amongst neighbours, meeting and entertaining one another on the vigil or eve of the new year, and commonly called the *wassail-bol*.' See *Hamlet*, Act i. Sc. 4.

¹² To *convince* is to *overcome*. See p. 281, Act iv. Sc. 3, of this play.

That memory, the warder of the brain,
 Shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason
 A limbeck¹³ only: When in swinish sleep
 Their drenched¹⁴ natures lie, as in a death,
 What cannot you and I perform upon
 His spongy officers; who shall bear the guilt
 Of our great quell¹⁵?

Macb. Bring forth men-children only!
 For thy undaunted mettle should compose
 Nothing but males. Will it not be receiv'd¹⁶,
 When we have mark'd with blood those sleepy two
 Of his own chamber, and us'd their very daggers,
 That they have don't?

Lady M. Who dares receive it other,
 As we shall make our griefs and clamour roar
 Upon his death?

Macb. I am settled, and bend up
 Each corporal agent to this terrible feat.
 Away, and mock the time with fairest show;
 False face must hide what the false heart doth know.
 [Exeunt.]

ACT II.

SCENE I. *The same. Court within the Castle.*

*Enter BANQUO and FLEANCE, and a Servant,
 with a Torch before them.*

Ban. How goes the night, boy?

Fle. The moon is down: I have not heard the
 clock.

Ban. And she goes down at twelve.

¹³ A *limbeck* is a vessel through which distilled liquors pass into the recipient. So shall the *receipt* (i. e. receptacle) of reason be like this empty vessel.

¹⁴ i. e. drowned in drink.

¹⁵ *Quell* is murder; from the Saxon *quellan*, to kill.

¹⁶ i. e. apprehended, understood.

Fle. I take't, 'tis later, sir.

Ban. Hold, take my sword:—There's husbandry¹ in heaven,

Their candles are all out.—Take thee that too.

A heavy summons lies like lead upon me,

And yet I would not sleep: Merciful powers!

Restrain in me the cursed thoughts, that nature

Gives way to in repose²: Give me my sword;—

Enter MACBETH, and a Servant with a Torch.

Who's there?

Macb. A friend.

Ban. What, sir, not yet at rest? The king's a-bed:

He hath been in unusual pleasure, and

Sent forth great largess³ to your officers⁴:

This diamond he greets your wife withal,

By the name of most kind hostess; and shut up⁵

In measureless content.

Macb. Being unprepar'd,

Our will became the servant to defect;

Which else should free have wrought⁶.

¹ *Husbandry* here means *thrift*, frugality. In *Romeo and Juliet* we have a similar expression:—

'Night's candles are burnt out.'

² It is apparent from what Banquo says afterwards, that he had been solicited in a dream to attempt something in consequence of the prophecy of the witches, that his waking senses were shocked at; and Shakspeare has here most exquisitely contrasted his character with that of Macbeth. Banquo is praying against being tempted to encourage thoughts of guilt even in his sleep; while Macbeth is hurrying into temptation, and revolving in his mind every scheme, however flagitious, that may assist him to complete his purpose. The one is unwilling to sleep, lest the same phantoms should assail his resolution again, while the other is depriving himself of rest through impatience to commit the murder.

³ *Largess*, bounty.

⁴ The old copy reads *offices*. *Officers* of a household was the common term for servants in Shakspeare's time. He has before called the king's chamberlains 'his spongy officers.'

⁵ Steevens has rightly explained 'to shut up' by 'to conclude,' and the examples he has adduced are satisfactory; but Mr. Boswell supposed that it meant *enclosed*, and quoted a passage from Barrow to support his opinion. The authorities of the poet's time are against Mr. Boswell's interpretation.

⁶ Being unprepared, our will (or desire to entertain the king honourably) became the servant to defect (i. e. was constrained

Ban. All's well.
I dreamt last night of the three weird sisters:
To you they have show'd some truth.

Macb. I think not of them:
Yet, when we can entreat an hour to serve,
Would spend it in some words upon that business,
If you would grant the time.

Ban. At your kind'st leisure.

Macb. If you shall cleave to my consent⁷,—when
'tis,
It shall make honour for you.

Ban. So I lose none,
In seeking to augment it, but still keep
My bosom franchis'd, and allegiance clear,
I shall be counsel'd.

by defective means), which else should free have wrought (i. e. otherwise our zeal should have been manifest by more liberal entertainments. *Which* relates not to the last antecedent, *defect*, but to *will*.

⁷ *Consent* is *accord*, *agreement*, a combination for a particular purpose. By 'if you shall cleave to my consent,' Macbeth means, 'if you shall adhere to me (i. e. agree or accord with my views), when 'tis (i. e. when events shall fall out as they are predicted), it shall make honour for you.' We have the word again in this sense in King Henry IV. Part II, where speaking of Shallow and his servants, Falstaff says, 'they flock together in *consent* like so many wild geese.' So again in As You Like It, the usurping Duke says, after the flight of Rosalind and Celia:—

‘—————some villains of my court
Are of *consent* and sufferance in this.’

Sir William Davenant's paraphrase of this passage shows that he understood it as I have explained it:—

‘If when the prophecy begins to look like, you will
Adhere to me, it shall make honour for you.’

Macbeth mentally refers to the crown which he expected to obtain in consequence of the murder that he was about to commit. *We* comprehend all that passes in his mind; but Banquo is still in ignorance of it. His reply is only that of a man who determines to combat every possible temptation to do ill; and therefore expresses a resolve that, in spite of future combinations of interest or struggles for power, he will attempt nothing that may obscure his present honours, alarm his conscience, or corrupt loyalty. Macbeth could never mean, while yet the success of his attack on the life of Duncan was uncertain, to afford Banquo the most dark or distant hint of his criminal designs on the crown. Had he acted thus incautiously, Banquo would naturally have become his accuser as soon as the murder had been discovered. Malone proposed to read *content* instead of *consent*; but his reasons are far from convincing, and there seems no necessity for change.

Macb. Good repose, the while!

Ban. Thanks, sir; The like to you! [*Exit BAN.*]

Macb. Go, bid thy mistress, when my drink is ready,

She strike upon the bell. Get thee to bed.

[*Exit Servant.*]

Is this a dagger, which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee:—

I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.

Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible

To feeling, as to sight? or art thou but

A dagger of the mind; a false creation,

Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?

I see thee yet, in form as palpable

As this which now I draw.

Thou marshal'st me the way that I was going;

And such an instrument I was to use.

Mine eyes are made the fools o' the other senses,

Or else worth all the rest: I see thee still:

And on thy blade, and dudgeon⁸, gouts⁹ of blood,

Which was not so before.—There's no such thing:

It is the bloody business, which informs

Thus to mine eyes.—Now o'er the one half world

Nature seems dead¹⁰, and wicked dreams abuse

⁸ *Dudgeon* for *handle*; 'a *dudgeon* dagger is a dagger, whose handle is made of the root of box,' according to Bishop Wilkins in the dictionary subjoined to his *Real Character*. *Dudgeon* is the *root of box*. It has not been remarked that there is a peculiar propriety in giving the word to Macbeth, 'Pugnale alla scoccese, being a Scotch or *dudgeon* haft dagger,' according to *Torriano*.

⁹ *Gouts*, drops; from the French *gouttes*.

¹⁰ Dryden's well known lines in the *Conquest of Mexico* are here transcribed that the reader may observe the contrast between them and this passage of Shakspeare:—

'All things are hush'd as Nature's self lay dead,
The mountains seem to nod their drowsy head,
The little birds in dreams their songs repeat,
And sleeping flow'rs beneath the night dews sweat,
Even lust and envy sleep!'

In the second part of Marston's *Antonio and Mellida*, 1602, we have the following lines:—

The curtain'd sleeper¹¹; witchcraft celebrates
 Pale Hecate's offerings; and wither'd murder,
 Alarum'd by his sentinel, the wolf,
 Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace,
 With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design
 Moves like a ghost¹².——Thou sure and firm-set
 earth,

Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
 Thy very stones prate of my where-about,
 And take the present horror from the time,
 Which now suits with it¹³.—Whiles I threat, he lives;

'Tis yet the dead of night, yet all the earth is clutch'd
 In the dull leaden hand of snoring sleep:
 No breath disturbs the quiet of the air,
 No spirit moves upon the breast of earth,
 Save howling dogs, night-crows, and screeching owls,
 Save meagre ghosts, Piero, and black thoughts.
 —————I am great in blood,
 Unequalled in revenge:—you horrid scouts
 That sentinel swart night, give loud applause
 From your large palms.'

¹¹ The old copy has *sleepe*. The emendation was proposed by Steevens, and is well worthy of a place in the text; the word *now* having been formerly admitted to complete the metre.

¹² The old copy reads *sides*: Pope made the alteration. Johnson objects to the epithet *ravishing strides*. But Steevens has shown that a *stride* was not always an action of violence, impetuosity, or tumult. Thus in *The Faerie Queene*, b. iv. c. viii.

'With easy steps so soft as foot could *stride*.'

And in other places we have an *easy stride*, a *leisurable stride*, &c. Warburton observes, that the justness of the similitude is not very obvious. But a stanza in Shakspeare's *Tarquin and Lucrece* will explain it:—

'Now stole upon the time in dead of night,
 When heavy sleep had clos'd up mortal eyes;
 No comfortable star did lend his light,
 No noise but owls' and wolves' dead-boding cries;
 Now serves the season that they may surprise
 The silly lambs. Pure thoughts are dead and still,
 While lust and murder wake to stain and kill.'

¹³ Macbeth would have nothing break through the universal silence that added such horror to the night, as well suited with the bloody deed he was about to perform. Burke, in his *Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful*, observes, that 'all general privations are great because they are terrible.' The poets of antiquity have many of them heightened their scenes of terror by dwelling on the silence which accompanied them:—

'Dii quibus imperium et animarum umbraeque silentes,
 Et Chaos et Phlegethon, loca nocte tacentia late.—*Virgil*.

Statius, in describing the Lemnian massacre, notices the silence and solitude in a striking manner:—

'Conticuere domus,' &c.

Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives.
[*A bell rings.*
I go, and it is done; the bell invites me.
Hear it not, Duncan; for it is a knell
That summons thee to heaven, or to hell. [*Exit.*

SCENE II. *The same.*

Enter LADY MACBETH.

Lady M. That which hath made them drunk, hath
made me bold:
What hath quench'd them, hath given me fire:—
Hark!—Peace!
It was the owl that shriek'd, the fatal bellman,
Which gives the stern'st good-night. He is about it:
The doors are open; and the surfeited grooms
Do mock their charge with snores: I have drugg'd
their possets,
That death and nature do contend about them,
Whether they live or die.

Macb. [*Within.*] Who's there?—what, ho!

Lady M. Alack! I am afraid, they have awak'd,
And 'tis not done:—the attempt, and not the deed,
Confounds us:—Hark!—I laid their daggers ready,
He could not miss them.—Had he not resembled
My father as he slept, I had done't.—My husband?

and when he enumerates the terrors to which Chiron had familiarized his pupil, he subjoins:—

'—nec ad vastae trepidare *silentia* sylvae.'

Tacitus, describing the distress of the Roman army, under Cæcina, concludes by observing—*Ducemque terruit, dira quies*. In all the preceding passages, as Pliny remarks, concerning places of worship, *silentia ipsa adoramus*. To these instances adduced by Steevens, Malone adds another from the second *Aeneid*:—

‘—————vestigia retro

Observata sequor per noctem, et lumine lustro,

Horror ubique animos, simul ipsa silentia terrent.

and the well known lines which exposed Dryden to so much ridicule:—

'A horrid stillness first invades the ear,
And in that silence we the tempest hear.'

Enter MACBETH.

Macb. I have done the deed:— Didst thou not hear a noise?

Lady M. I heard the owl scream, and the crickets cry.

Did not you speak?

Macb. When?

Lady M. Now.

Macb. As I descended?

Lady M. Ay.

Macb. Hark!—

Who lies i' the second chamber?

Lady M. Donalbain.

Macb. This is a sorry sight.

[*Looking on his hands.*]

Lady M. A foolish thought, to say a sorry sight.

Macb. There's one did laugh in his sleep, and one cried, *murder!*

That they did wake each other; I stood and heard them:

But they did say their prayers, and address'd them Again to sleep.

Lady M. There are two lodg'd together.

Macb. One cried, *God bless us!* and, *Amen*, the other;

As¹ they had seen me, with these hangman's hands.

Listening their fear², I could not say, amen,

When they did say, God bless us.

Lady M. Consider it not so deeply.

Macb. But wherefore could not I pronounce, amen?

I had most need of blessing, and amen

Stuck in my throat.

Lady M. These deeds must not be thought After these ways; so, it will make us mad.

Macb. Methought, I heard a voice cry, *Sleep no more!*

¹ *As for as if.*

² i. e. listening to their fear: the particle omitted.

Macbeth does murder sleep, the innocent sleep;
 Sleep, that knits up the ravell'd sleeve³ of care,
 The death of each day's life, sore labour's bath,
 Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,
 Chief nourisher in life's feast;—

Lady M. What do you mean?

Macb. Still it cried, *Sleep no more!* to all the house:
Glamis hath murder'd sleep; and therefore *Cawdor*
 Shall sleep no more. *Macbeth* shall sleep no more⁴!

Lady M. Who was it that thus cried? Why,
 worthy thane,

You do unbend your noble strength, to think
 So brainsickly of things:—Go, get some water,
 And wash this filthy witness from your hand.--
 Why did you bring these daggers from the place?
 They must lie there: Go, carry them; and smear
 The sleepy grooms with blood.

Macb. I'll go no more:

I am afraid to think what I have done;
 Look on't again, I dare not.

Lady M. Infirm of purpose!

Give me the daggers: The sleeping, and the
 dead,

Are but as pictures: 'tis the eye of childhood,
 That fears a painted devil. If he do bleed,

³ *Sleeve* is unwrought silk, sometimes also called *floss* silk. It appears to be the coarse ravelled part separated by passing through the slaie (reed comb) of the weaver's loom; and hence called *sleaved* or *sleided* silk. I suspect that *sleeveless*, which has puzzled the etymologists, is that which cannot be sleaved, sleided, or unravelled; and therefore useless: thus a *sleeveless* errand would be a *fruitless* one.

⁴ Steevens observes that this triple menace, accommodated to the different titles of *Macbeth*, is too quaint to be received as the natural ebullition of a guilty mind; but Mr. Boswell thinks that there is no ground for his objection. He thus explains the passage: *Glamis* hath murder'd sleep; and therefore my lately acquired dignity can afford no comfort to one who suffers the agony of remorse,—*Cawdor* shall sleep no more; nothing can restore me to that peace of mind which I enjoyed in a comparatively humble state; the once innocent *Macbeth* shall sleep no more.

I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal,
For it must seem their guilt⁵.

[*Exit. Knocking within.*

Macb. Whence is that knocking?
How is't with me, when every noise appals me?
What hands are here! Ha! they pluck out mine eyes!
Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood⁶
Clean from my hand? No; this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnardine⁷,
Making the green—one red⁸.

Re-enter LADY MACBETH.

Lady M. My hands are of your colour; but I shame
To wear a heart so white. [*Knock.*] I hear a knocking
At the south entry:—retire we to our chamber:
A little water clears us of this deed:

⁵ This quibble too occurs frequently in old plays. Shakspeare has it again in King Henry IV. Part II. Act iv. Sc. 4:—

‘England shall double *gild* his treble *guilt*.’

And in King Henry V.:—

‘Have for the *gilt* of France, O *guilt* indeed.’

‘Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood,’ &c.

⁶ *Suscipit, ô Gellii, quantum non ultima Tethys,
Nec genitor Nympharum abluat oceanus.*

Catullus in Gellium, 83.

*Οἶμαί γὰρ οὐτ' ἄν Ἰστρον οὐτε Φᾶσιν ἄν
Νίψαι καθαρεύῃ τήνδε τὴν στέγην.*

Sophoc. Oïdip. Tyr. 1227.

Quis eluet me Tanais? aut quae barbaris

Moeotis undis Pontico incumbens mari?

Non ipse toto magnus oceano pater

Tantum expirarit sceleris! Senec. Hippol.

Non, si Neptuni fluctu renovare operam des;

Non, mare si totum velit eluere omnibus undis.

Lucret. l. vi. ver. 1075.

Thus also, in *The Insatiate Countess*, by Marston, 1613:—

‘Although the waves of all the northern sea

Should flow for ever through these guilty hands,

Yet the sanguinolent stain would extant be.’

⁷ To *incarnardine* is to stain of a red colour.

⁸ In the old copy this line stands thus:—

‘Making the Green one, Red.’

The punctuation in the text was adopted by Steevens at the suggestion of Murphy. Malone prefers the old punctuation. Steevens has well defended the arrangement of his text, which seems to me to deserve the preference.

How easy is it then? Your constancy
Hath left you unattended⁹. — [*Knocking.*] Hark!

more knocking:
Get on your nightgown, lest occasion call us,
And show us to be watchers: — Be not lost
So poorly in your thoughts.

Macb. To know my deed,—'twere best not know
myself¹⁰. [*Knock.*
Wake Duncan with thy knocking! I would, thou
couldst? [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *The same.*

Enter a Porter. [*Knocking within.*

Porter. Here's a knocking, indeed! If a man
were porter of hell-gate, he should have old¹ turn-
ing the key. [*Knocking.*] Knock, knock, knock:
Who's there, i'the name of Belzebub? Here's a
farmer², that hanged himself on the expectation of
plenty: Come in time; have napkins³ enough about
you; here you'll sweat for't. [*Knocking.*] Knock,
knock: Who's there, i'the' other devil's name?
'Faith, here's an equivocator⁴, that could swear in
both the scales against either scale; who committed
treason enough for God's sake, yet could not equi-
vocate to heaven: O, come in, equivocator. [*Knock-
ing.*] Knock, knock, knock; Who's there? 'Faith,

⁹ 'Your constancy hath left you unattended.'—Vide note on King Henry V. Act v. Sc. 2.

¹⁰ This is an answer to Lady Macbeth's reproof. 'While I have the thoughts of this deed, it were best not know, or be lost to myself.'

¹ i. e. frequent.

² 'Here's a farmer that hanged himself on the expectation of plenty.' So in Hall's Satires, b. iv. sat. 6:—

'Each muckworme will be rich with lawless gaine,
Altho' he smother up mowes of seven yeares graine,
And hang'd himself when corne grows cheap againe.'

³ i. e. handkerchiefs. In the dictionaries of the time *sudarium* is rendered by 'napkin or handkerchief, wherewith we wipe away the sweat.'

⁴ i. e. a Jesuit. That order were troublesome to the state, and held in odium in the reigns of Elizabeth and James. They were inventors of the execrable doctrine of *equivocation*.

here's an English tailor come hither, for stealing out of a French hose: Come in, tailor; here you may roast your goose. [*Knocking.*] Knock, knock: Never at quiet! What are you?—But this place is too cold for hell. I'll devil-porter it no further: I had thought to have let in some of all professions, that go the primrose way to the everlasting bonfire⁵. [*Knocking.*] Anon, anon; I pray you, remember the porter. [*Opens the gate.*]

Enter MACDUFF and LENOX.

Macd. Was it so late, friend, ere you went to bed, That you do lie so late?

Port. 'Faith, sir, we were carousing till the second cock⁶: and drink, sir, is a great provoker of three things.

Macd. What three things does drink especially provoke?

Port. Marry, sir, nose-painting, sleep, and urine. Lechery, sir, it provokes, and unprovokes: it provokes the desire, but it takes away the performance. Therefore, much drink may be said to be an equivocator with lechery: it makes him, and it mars him; it sets him on, and it takes him off; it persuades him, and disheartens him; makes him stand to, and not stand to: in conclusion, equivocates him in⁷ a sleep, and, giving him the lie, leaves him.

Macd. I believe, drink gave thee the lie last night.

Port. That it did, sir, i'the very throat o'me: But I requited him for his lie; and, I think, being

⁵ So in Hamlet:—

'Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads.'

And in All's Well that Ends Well:—'The flowery way that leads to the great fire.'

⁶ i. e. till three o'clock, according to a passage in Romeo and Juliet:—

'———The second cock has crow'd,
The curfew bell has toll'd: 'tis three o'clock.

⁷ In for into.

too strong for him, though he took up my legs sometime, yet I made a shift to cast him.

Macd. Is thy master stirring? —

Our knocking has awak'd him; here he comes.

Enter MACBETH.

Len. Good-morrow, noble sir!

Macb. Good-morrow, both!

Macd. Is the king stirring, worthy thane?

Macb. Not yet.

Macd. He did command me to call timely on him; I have almost slipp'd the hour.

Macb. I'll bring you to him.

Macd. I know, this is a joyful trouble to you; But yet, 'tis one.

Macb. The labour, we delight in, physicks⁸ pain. This is the door.

Macd. I'll make so bold to call,
For 'tis my limited service⁹. *[Exit MACDUFF.]*

Len. Goes the king hence to-day?

Macb. He does:—he did appoint it so.

Len. The night has been unruly; Where we lay,
Our chimneys were blown down: and, as they say,
Lamentings heard i' the air; strange screams of death;
And prophesying, with accents terrible,
Of dire combustion, and confus'd events,
New hatch'd to the woful time. The obscure bird
Clamour'd the livelong night: some say, the earth
Was feverous, and did shake.

Macb. 'Twas a rough night.

Len. My young remembrance cannot parallel
A fellow to it.

⁸ i. e. *alleviates it.* *Physic* is defined by Baret, a *remedie*, an *helping or curing.* So in *The Tempest*:—

'There be some sports are painful; and their labour
Delight in them sets off.'

⁹ i. e. *Appointed service.*

Re-enter MACDUFF.

Macd. O horror! horror! horror! Tongue, nor heart,
Cannot conceive, nor name thee¹⁰!

Macb. Len. What's the matter?

Macd. Confusion now hath made his masterpiece!
Most sacrilegious murder hath broke ope
The Lord's anointed temple, and stole thence
The life o'the building.

Macb. What is't you say? the life?

Len. Mean you his majesty?

Macd. Approach the chamber, and destroy your
sight

With a new Gorgon:—Do not bid me speak;
See, and then speak yourselves. — Awake! awake! —

[*Exeunt MACBETH and LENOX.*

Ring the alarum-bell:—Murder! and treason!
Banquo, and Donalbain! Malcolm! awake!
Shake off this drowsy sleep, death's counterfeit,
And look on death itself!—up, up, and see
The great doom's image!——Malcolm! Banquo!
As from your graves rise up, and walk like sprights,
To countenance this horror! [*Bell rings.*

Enter LADY MACBETH.

Lady M. What's the business,
That such a hideous trumpet calls to parley
The sleepers of the house? speak, speak,——

Macd. O, gentle lady,
'Tis not for you to hear what I can speak:
The repetition, in a woman's ear,
Would murder as it fell¹¹.——O Banquo! Banquo!

¹⁰ It has been already observed that Shakspeare uses two negatives, not to make an affirmative, but to deny more strongly.

¹¹ 'The repetition, in a woman's ear,
Would murder as it fell.'

So in Hamlet:—

'——He would drown the stage with tears,
And cleave the general ear with horrid speech.'

And in The Puritan, 1607:—'The punishments that shall follow you in this world would with horror kill the ear, should hear them related.'

Enter BANQUO.

Our royal master's murder'd!

Lady M. Woe, alas!

What, in our house?

Ban. Too cruel, any where.—

Dear Duff, I pr'ythee, contradict thyself,
And say, it is not so.

Re-enter MACBETH and LENOX.

Macb. Had I but died an hour before this chance,
I had liv'd a blessed time; for, from this instant,
There's nothing serious in mortality:
All is but toys: renown, and grace, is dead;
The wine of life is drawn, and the mere lees
Is left this vault to brag of.

Enter MALCOLM and DONALBAIN.

Don. What is amiss?

Macb. You are, and do not know it:
The spring, the head, the fountain of your blood
Is stopp'd; the very source of it is stopp'd.

Macd. Your royal father's murder'd.

Mal. O, by whom?

Len. Those of his chamber, as it seem'd, had done't:
Their hands and faces were all badg'd with blood,
So were their daggers, which, unwip'd, we found
Upon their pillows:

They star'd, and were distracted; no man's life
Was to be trusted with them.

Macb. O, yet I do repent me of my fury,
That I did kill them.

Macd. Wherefore did you so?

Macb. Who can be wise, amaz'd, temperate, and
furious,
Loyal and neutral, in a moment? No man:
The expedition of my violent love
Outran the pauser reason.—Here lay Duncan,

His silver skin lac'd with his golden blood¹²;
 And his gash'd stabs look'd like a breach in nature,
 For ruin's wasteful entrance: there, the murderers,
 Steep'd in the colours of their trade, their daggers
 Unmannerly breech'd with gore¹³: Who could re-
 frain,

That had a heart to love, and in that heart
 Courage, to make his love known?

Lady M. Help me hence, ho!

Macd. Look to the lady.

Mal. Why do we hold our tongues,
 That most may claim this argument for ours?

Don. What should be spoken,
 Here, where our fate, hid in an augre-hole,
 May rush, and seize us? Let's away; our tears
 Are not yet brew'd.

Mal. Nor our strong sorrow
 Upon the foot of motion.

Ban. Look to the lady:—

[*LADY MACBETH is carried out.*]

And when we have our naked frailties hid¹⁴,
 That suffer in exposure, let us meet,
 And question this most bloody piece of work,
 To know it further. Fears and scruples shake us:
 In the great hand of God I stand; and, thence,

¹² 'His silver skin lac'd with his golden blood.' To gild with blood is a very common phrase in old plays. See also King John, Act ii. Sc. 2.—Johnson says, 'it is not improbable that Shakspeare put these forced and unnatural metaphors into the mouth of Macbeth, as a mark of artifice and dissimulation, to show the difference between the studied language of hypocrisy and the natural outcries of sudden passion. This whole speech, so considered, is a remarkable instance of judgment, as it consists of antithesis only.'

¹³ 'Breech'd with gore,' covered with blood to their hilts.

¹⁴ i. e. when we have clothed our half drest bodies, which may take cold from being exposed to the air. It is possible, as Steevens remarks, that, in such a cloud of words, the meaning might escape the reader. The Porter had already said that this 'place is too cold for hell,' meaning the court-yard of the castle in which Banquo and the rest now are. So in *Timon of Athens*:—

'———Call the creatures

Whose naked natures live in all the spight
 Of wreakful heaven.'

Against the undivulg'd pretence¹⁵ I fight
Of treasonous malice.

Macb. And so do I.

All. So all.

Macb. Let's briefly put on manly readiness,
And meet i' the hall together.

All. Well contented.

[*Exeunt all but MAL. and DON.*]

Mal. What will you do? Let's not consort with
them:

To show an unfelt sorrow, is an office
Which the false man does easy: I'll to England.

Don. To Ireland, I; our separated fortune
Shall keep us both the safer: where we are,
There's daggers in men's smiles: the near in blood,
The nearer bloody¹⁶.

Mal. This murderous shaft that's shot,
Hath not yet lighted¹⁷; and our safest way
Is, to avoid the aim. Therefore, to horse;
And let us not be dainty of leave-taking,
But shift away: There's warrant in that theft
Which steals itself, when there's no mercy left.

[*Exeunt.*]

¹⁵ *Pretence* is here put for *design* or *intention*. It is so used again in *The Winter's Tale*:—'The *pretence* whereof being by circumstance partly laid open.' Thus again in this tragedy:—

'What good could they pretend;'

i. e. *intend* to themselves. Banquo's meaning is—'in our present state of doubt and uncertainty about this murder, I have nothing to do but to put myself under the direction of God; and, relying on his support, I here declare myself an eternal enemy to this treason, and to all its further designs that have not yet come to light.'

¹⁶ '——the near in blood,
The nearer bloody.'

Meaning that he suspects Macbeth to be the murderer; for he was the nearest in blood to the two princes, being the cousin-german of Duncan.

¹⁷ The allusion of the *unlighted shaft* appears to be—the death of the king only could neither insure the crown to Macbeth, nor accomplish any other purpose, while his sons were yet living, who had therefore just reason to apprehend that they should be removed by the same means. Malcolm therefore means to say, 'The shaft has not yet done all its intended mischief; I and my brother are yet to be destroyed before it will light on the ground and do no more harm.'

SCENE IV. *Without the Castle.**Enter Rosse and an Old Man.*

Old M. Threescore and ten I can remember well:
Within the volume of which time, I have seen
Hours dreadful, and things strange; but this sore
night

Hath trifled former knowings.

Rosse. Ah, good father,
Thou see'st, the heavens, as troubled with man's act,
Threaten his bloody stage: by the clock, 'tis day,
And yet dark night strangles the travelling lamp:
Is it night's predominance, or the day's shame,
That darkness does the face of earth entomb,
When living light should kiss it¹?

Old M. 'Tis unnatural,
Even like the deed that's done. On Tuesday last,
A falcon, tow'ring in her pride of place²,
Was by a mousing owl hawk'd at, and kill'd.

Rosse. And Duncan's horses (a thing most strange
and certain),
Beauteous and swift, the minions of their race,
Turn'd wild in nature, broke their stalls, flung out,
Contending 'gainst obedience, as they would make
War with mankind.

Old M. 'Tis said, they ate each other.

Rosse. They did so; to the amazement of mine eyes,
That look'd upon't. Here comes the good Mac-
duff: —

¹ 'After the murder of King Duffe,' says Holinshed, 'for the space of six months together there appeared no sunne by daye, nor moone by night, in anie part of the realme; but still the sky was covered with continual clouds; and sometimes such outrageous winds arose, with lightnings and tempests, that the people were in great fear of present destruction.'—It is evident that Shakespeare had this passage in his thoughts. Most of the portents here mentioned are related by Holinshed, as accompanying King Duffe's death: 'there was a *sparhawk* strangled by an owl,' and 'horses of singular beauty and swiftness did eat their own flesh.'

² 'A falcon tow'ring in her pride of place,' a technical phrase in falconry for *soaring to the highest pitch*. *Faulcon haultain* was the French term for a towering or high flying hawk.

Enter MACDUFF.

How goes the world, sir, now?

Macd. Why, see you not?

Rosse. Is't known who did this more than bloody deed?

Macd. Those that Macbeth hath slain.

Rosse. Alas, the day!

What good could they pretend³?

Macd. They were suborn'd:

Malcolm, and Donalbain, the king's two sons,
Are stol'n away and fled; which puts upon them
Suspicion of the deed.

Rosse. 'Gainst nature still:

Thriftless ambition, that will ravin up
Thine own life's means!—Then 'tis most like,
The sovereignty will fall upon Macbeth⁴.

Macd. He is already nam'd; and gone to Scone,
To be invested.

Rosse. Where is Duncan's body?

Macd. Carried to Colme-kill⁵,
The sacred storehouse of his predecessors,
And guardian of their bones.

Rosse. Will you to Scone?

Macd. No, cousin, I'll to Fife.

Rosse. Well, I will thither.

Macd. Well, may you see things well done
there;—adieu!—

Lest our old robes sit easier than our new!

Rosse. Father, farewell.

Old M. God's benison go with you: and with those
That would make good of bad, and friends of foes!

[*Exeunt.*]

³ *Pretend*, in the sense of the Latin *praetendo*, to design, or 'lay for a thing before it come,' as the old dictionaries explain it.

⁴ Macbeth, by his birth, stood next in succession to the crown after the sons of Duncan. King Malcolm, Duncan's predecessor, had two daughters, the eldest of whom was the mother of Duncan, the younger the mother of Macbeth.—*Holinshed*.

⁵ *Colme-kill* is the famous *Iona*, one of the western isles mentioned by *Holinshed* as the burialplace of many ancient kings of Scotland. *Colme-kill* means the cell or chapel of St. Columbo. See note 19, p. 201.

ACT III.

SCENE I. Fores. *A Room in the Palace.**Enter BANQUO.*

Ban. Thou hast it now, King, Cawdor, Glamis, all,
 As the weird women promis'd; and, I fear,
 Thou play'dst most foully for't; yet it was said,
 It should not stand in thy posterity;
 But that myself should be the root and father
 Of many kings. If there come truth from them
 (As upon thee, Macbeth, their speeches shine),
 Why, by the verities on thee made good,
 May they not be my oracles as well,
 And set me up in hope? But, hush; no more.

*Senet sounded. Enter MACBETH, as King; LADY
 MACBETH, as Queen; LENOX, ROSSE, LORDS,
 Ladies, and Attendants.*

Macb. Here's our chief guest.

Lady M. If he had been forgotten,
 It had been as a gap in our great feast,
 And all things unbecoming.

Macb. To-night we hold a solemn supper¹, sir,
 And I'll request your presence.

Ban. Let your highness
 Command upon me; to the which, my duties
 Are with a most indissoluble tie
 For ever knit.

Macb. Ride you this afternoon?

Ban. Ay, my good lord.

Macb. We should have else desir'd your good
 advice

¹ 'A solemn supper.' This was the phrase of Shakspeare's time for a feast or banquet given on a particular occasion, to solemnize any event, as a birth, marriage, coronation, &c. Howel, in a letter to Sir T. Hawke, 1636, says, 'I was invited yesternight to a *solemne supper* by B. J. [Ben Jonson], where you were deeply remembered.'

(Which still hath been both grave and prosperous),
In this day's council; but we'll take to-morrow.
Is't far you ride?

Ban. As far, my lord, as will fill up the time
"Twixt this and supper: go not my horse the better²,
I must become a borrower of the night,
For a dark hour, or twain.

Macb. Fail not our feast.

Ban. My lord, I will not.

Macb. We hear, our bloody cousins are bestow'd
In England, and in Ireland; not confessing
Their cruel parricide, filling their hearers
With strange invention: But of that to-morrow:
When, therewithal, we shall have cause of state,
Craving us jointly. Hie you to horse: Adieu,
Till you return at night. Goes Fleance with you?

Ban. Ay, my good lord: our time does call
upon us.

Macb. I wish your horses swift, and sure of foot;
And so I do commend³ you to their backs.

Farewell.— — [Exit BANQUO.

Let every man be master of his time
Till seven at night; to make society
The sweeter welcome, we will keep ourself
Till supper-time alone: while then, God be with you.

[Exeunt LADY MACBETH, Lords, Ladies, &c.
Sirrah, a word with you: attend those men
Our pleasure?

Atten. They are, my lord, without the palace gate.

Macb. Bring them before us. — [Exit Atten.]

To be thus is nothing;
But to be safely thus:—Our fears in Banquo
Stick deep; and in his royalty⁴ of nature
Reigns that, which would be fear'd: 'Tis much he
dares;

² i. e. 'if my horse does not go well.' Shakspeare often uses the comparative for the positive and superlative.

³ i. e. commit. See note on p. 223.

⁴ Nobleness.

And, to⁵ that dauntless temper of his mind,
 He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valour
 To act in safety. There is none, but he
 Whose being I do fear: and, under him,
 My genius is rebuk'd; as, it is said,
 Mark Antony's was by Cæsar. He chid the sisters,
 When first they put the name of King upon me,
 And bade them speak to him; then, prophetlike,
 They hail'd him father to a line of kings:
 Upon my head they plac'd a fruitless crown,
 And put a barren sceptre in my gripe,
 Thence to be wrench'd with an unlineal hand,
 No son of mine succeeding. If it be so,
 For Banquo's issue have I fil'd⁶ my mind;
 For them the gracious Duncan have I murder'd;
 Put rancours in the vessel of my peace
 Only for them; and mine eternal jewel
 Given to the common enemy of man⁷,
 To make them kings; the seed of Banquo kings!
 Rather than so, come, fate, into the list,
 And champion me to the utterance⁸!——Who's
 there? —

Re-enter Attendant, with two Murderers.

Now go to the door, and stay there till we call.

[*Exit Attendant.*

Was it not yesterday we spoke together?

1 *Mur.* It was, so please your highness.

Macb.

Well then, now

⁵ 'And to that.' i. e. in addition to.

⁶ For defiled.

⁷ 'The common enemy of man.' Shakspeare repeats the phrase in *Twelfth Night*, Act iii. Sc. 4:—'Defy the devil: consider, he's an enemy to mankind.' The phrase was common among his contemporaries; the word *fiend*, Johnson remarks, signifies *enemy*.

⁸ 'To the utterance.' This phrase, which is found in writers who preceded Shakspeare, is borrowed from the French; *se battre à l'outrance*, to fight desperately or to extremity, even to death. The sense therefore is:—'Let fate, that has foredoomed the exaltation of Banquo's sons, enter the lists against me in defence of its own decrees, I will fight against it to the extremity, whatever be the consequence.'

Have you considered of my speeches? Know,
That it was he, in the times past, which held you
So under fortune; which, you thought, had been
Our innocent self: this I made good to you
In our last conference, pass'd in probation⁹ with you,
How you were borne in hand¹⁰; how cross'd; the
instruments;

Who wrought with them; and all things else, that
might,

To half a soul and to a nation craz'd,
Say, Thus did Banquo.

1 *Mur.* You made it known to us.

Macb. I did so; and went further, which is now
Our point of second meeting. Do you find
Your patience so predominant in your nature,
That you can let this go? Are you so gospell'd¹¹
To pray for that good man, and for his issue,
Whose heavy hand hath bow'd you to the grave,
And beggar'd yours for ever?

1 *Mur.* We are men, my liege.

Macb. Ay, in the catalogue ye go for men;
As hounds, and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels, curs,
Shoughs¹², water-rugs, and demi-wolves, are cleped¹³
All by the name of dogs: the valued file¹⁴
Distinguishes the swift, the slow, the subtle,
The house-keeper, the hunter, every one
According to the gift which bounteous nature
Hath in him clos'd; whereby he does receive
Particular addition¹⁵, from the bill

⁹ i. e. 'passed in proving to you.'

¹⁰ To bear in hand is to delude by encouraging hope and holding out fair prospects, without any intention of performance.

¹¹ i. e. are you so obedient to the precept of the gospel, which teaches us 'to pray for those that despitefully use us.'

¹² *Shoughs* are probably what we now call *shocks*. Nashe, in his *Lenten Stuffe*, mentions them 'a trundle-tail tike or shough or two.'

¹³ *Cleped*, called.

¹⁴ The *valued file* is the *descriptive list* wherein their value and peculiar qualities are set down, such a list of dogs may be found in Junius's *Nomenclator*, by Fleming, and may have furnished Shakspeare with the idea.

¹⁵ *Particular addition*, title, description.

That writes them all alike: and so of men.
Now, if you have a station in the file,
Not in the worst rank of manhood, say it;
And I will put that business in your bosoms,
Whose execution takes your enemy off;
Grapples you to the heart and love of us,
Who wear our health but sickly in his life,
Which in his death were perfect.

2 Mur. I am one, my liege,
Whom the vile blows and buffets of the world
Have so incens'd, that I am reckless what
I do, to spite the world.

1 Mur. And I another,
So weary with disasters, tugg'd with fortune,
That I would set my life on any chance,
To mend it, or be rid on't.

Macb. Both of you
Know, Banquo was your enemy.

2 Mur. True, my lord.

Macb. So is he mine: and in such bloody distance¹⁶,

That every minute of his being thrusts
Against my near'st of life: And though I could
With bare-fac'd power sweep him from my sight,
And bid my will avouch it; yet I must not,
For certain friends that are both his and mine,
Whose loves I may not drop, but wail his fall
Whom I myself struck down: and thence it is,
That I to your assistance do make love;
Masking the business from the common eye,
For sundry weighty reasons.

2 Mur. We shall, my lord,
Perform what you command us.

1 Mur. Though our lives——

Macb. Your spirits shine through you. Within
this hour, at most,
I will advise you where to plant yourselves:

¹⁶ 'Bloody distance' is mortal enmity.

Acquaint you with the perfect spy o' the time¹⁷,
 The moment on't: for't must be done to-night,
 And something from the palace; always thought,
 That I require a clearness¹⁸: And with him
 (To leave no rubs, nor botches, in the work),
 Fleance his son, that keeps him company,
 Whose absence is no less material to me
 Than is his father's, must embrace the fate
 Of that dark hour. Revolve yourselves apart;
 I'll come to you anon.

2 *Mur.* We are resolv'd, my lord.

Macb. I'll call upon you straight; abide within.
 It is concluded:—Banquo, thy soul's flight,
 If it find heaven, must find it out to-night. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. *The same. Another Room.*

Enter LADY MACBETH, and a Servant.

Lady M. Is Banquo gone from court?

Serv. Ay, madam, but returns again to-night.

Lady M. Say to the king, I would attend his
 leisure

For a few words.

Serv. Madam, I will. [*Exit.*]

Lady M. Nought's had, all's spent,
 Where our desire is got without content:
 'Tis safer to be that which we destroy,
 Than, by destruction, dwell in doubtful joy.

Enter MACBETH.

How now, my lord? why do you keep alone,
 Of sorriest¹ fancies your companions making?
 Using those thoughts, which should indeed have died

¹⁷ i. e. the exact time when you may look out or lie in wait for him.

¹⁸

————— always thought

'That I require a clearness.'

'Always remembering that I must stand clear of suspicion.'

¹ *Sorriest*, most melancholy.

With them they think on? Things without remedy,
Should be without regard: what's done, is done.

Macb. We have scotch'd the snake, not kill'd it;
She'll close, and be herself; whilst our poor malice
Remains in danger of her former tooth.

But let the frame of things disjoint,
Both the worlds suffer,

Ere we will eat our meal in fear, and sleep
In the affliction of these terrible dreams

That shake us nightly: Better be with the dead,
Whom we, to gain our place², have sent to peace,
Than on the torture of the mind to lie

In restless ecstasy³. Duncan is in his grave;

After life's fitful fever, he sleeps well;
Treason has done his worst: nor steel, nor poison,
Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing,
Can touch him further!

Lady M. Come on; gentle my lord,
Sleek o'er your rugged looks; be bright and jovial
Among your guests to-night.

Macb. So shall I, love;
And so, I pray, be you: let your remembrance⁴
Apply to Banquo: present him eminence⁵, both
With eye and tongue: unsafe the while, that we
Must lave our honours in these flattering streams;
And make our faces vizards to our hearts,
Disguising what they are⁶.

Lady M. You must leave this.

Macb. O, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife!
Thou know'st, that Banquo, and his Fleance, lives.

² The first folio reads *peace*. The second folio *place*.

³ *Ecstasy* in its general sense signifies any violent emotion or alienation of the mind. The old dictionaries render it *a trance*, *a dampe*, *a crampe*. Vide note on *The Tempest*, Act iii. Sc. 3, p. 64.

⁴ *Remembrance* is here employed as a quadrisyllable.

⁵ *Present him eminence*, do him the highest honour.

⁶ The sense of this passage (though clouded by metaphor, and perhaps by omission) appears to be as follows:—'It is a sign that our royalty is unsafe, when it must descend to flattery, and stoop to dissimulation.' The present arrangement of the text is by Malone.

Lady M. But in them nature's copy's not eterne⁷.

Macb. There's comfort yet; they are assailable;
Then be thou jocund; Ere the bat hath flown
His cloister'd flight; ere, to black Hecate's summons,
The shard-borne beetle⁸, with his drowsy hums,
Hath rung night's yawning peal, there shall be done
A deed of dreadful note.

Lady M. What's to be done?

Macb. Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck,
Till thou applaud the deed. Come, seeling⁹ night,
Skarf up the tender eye of pitiful day;
And, with thy bloody and invisible hand,
Cancel, and tear to pieces, that great bond
Which keeps me pale¹⁰!—Light thickens; and the
crow

⁷ Ritson has justly observed that 'Nature's copy' alludes to *copyhold* tenure; in which the tenant holds an estate for *life*, having nothing but the *copy* of the rolls of his lord's court to show for it. A *life-hold* tenure may well be said to be not eternal. The subsequent speech of Macbeth, in which he says,

'Cancel and tear to pieces *that great bond*,'

confirms this explanation. Many of Shakspeare's allusions are to legal customs.

⁸ That is the beetle *borne* along the air by its *shards* or *scaly* wings. Steevens had the merit of first showing that *shard* or *sherd* was the ancient word for a *scale* or outward covering, a case or sheath: as appears from the following passage cited by him, from Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, b. vi. fol. 138:—

'She sigh, her thought a dragon tho,
Whose *sherdes* shynen as the sonne.'

And again in book v. speaking of a serpent:—

'He was so *sherded* all about,
It held all edge tool without.'

In *Cymbeline* Shakspeare applies this epithet again to the beetle:—

'—————we find
The *sharded* beetle in a safer hold
Than is the full-winged eagle.'

A similar description of the beetle occurs in Chapman's *Eugenia*, 1614:—

'—————the beetle—
——there did raise
With his *Irate* wings his most unweildie paise;
And with his *knollike humming* gave the dor
Of death to men.'

⁹ i. e. blinding; to *seel* up the eyes of a hawk was to close them by sewing the eyelids together.

¹⁰ So in *Cymbeline*:—

'Cancel his *bond* of life, dear God, I pray.'

Makes wing to the rooky wood¹¹:
 Good things of day begin to droop and drowse;
 Whiles night's black agents to their preys do rouse¹².
 Thou marvell'st at my words; but hold thee still;
 Things, bad begun, make strong themselves by ill,
 So, pr'ythee, go with me. [Exeunt.]

SCENE III. *The same.*

A Park or Lawn, with a Gate leading to the Palace.

Enter three Murderers.

1 *Mur.* But who did bid thee join with us?

3 *Mur.* Macbeth.

2 *Mur.* He needs not our mistrust; since he delivers

Our offices, and what we have to do,
 To the direction just.

1 *Mur.* Then stand with us.

The west yet glimmers with some streaks of day:
 Now spurs the lated traveller apace,
 To gain the timely inn; and near approaches
 The subject of our watch.

3 *Mur.* Hark! I hear horses.

Ban. [*Within.*] Give us a light there, ho!

2 *Mur.* Then it is he; the rest

¹¹ By the expression, *light thickens*, Shakspeare means that it is *growing dark*. Thus in Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess*:—

'Fold your flocks up, for the air

'Gins to *thicken*, and the sun

Already his great course hath run.'

Spenser in the *Shepherd's Calendar* has:—

'———the welkin *thicks* apace.'

Notwithstanding Mr. Steevens's ingenious attempts to explain the *rooky* wood otherwise; it surely means nothing more than the wood inhabited by *rooks*. The poet has shown himself a close observer of nature in marking the return of these birds to their nest trees when the day is drawing to a close. Virgil has a very natural description of the same circumstance:—

———E pastu decedens agmine magno

Corvorum increpuit densis exercitus alis.'

¹² See note on King Richard III. Act iv. Sc. 1.

That are within the note of expectation¹,
Already are i'the court.

1 *Mur.* His horses go about.

3 *Mur.* Almost a mile: but he does usually,
So all men do, from hence to the palace gate
Make it their walk.

*Enter BANQUO and FLEANCE, a Servant with a
Torch preceding them.*

1 *Mur.* A light, a light!

3 *Mur.* 'Tis he.

1 *Mur.* Stand to't.

Ban. It will be rain to-night.

1 *Mur.* Let it come down.
[*Assaults BANQUO.*

Ban. O, treachery! Fly, good Fleance, fly, fly, fly;
Thou may'st revenge. O slave!

[*Dies.* Fleance and Servant escape².

3 *Mur.* Who did strike out the light?

1 *Mur.* Was't not the way?

3 *Mur.* There's but one down: the son is fled.

2 *Mur.* We have lost best half of our affair.

1 *Mur.* Well, let's away, and say how much is done.

SCENE IV. *A Room of State in the Palace.*

A Banquet prepared.

*Enter MACBETH, LADY MACBETH, ROSSE, LENOX,
Lords, and Attendants.*

Macb. You know your own degrees, sit down:
at first¹

And last, the hearty welcome.

¹ i. e. they who are set down in the list of guests, and expected to supper.

² *Fleance*, after the assassination of his father, fled into Wales, where, by the daughter of the prince of that country, he had a son named Walter, who afterwards became Lord High Steward of Scotland, and from thence assumed the name of Sir Walter Steward. From him, in a direct line, King James I. was descended; in compliment to whom Shakspeare has chosen to describe Banquo, who was equally concerned with Macbeth in the murder of Duncan, as innocent of that crime.

¹ 'At first and last.' Johnson with great plausibility proposes to read 'To first and last.'

Lords. Thanks to your majesty.

Macb. Ourselves will mingle with society,
And play the humble host.
Our hostess keeps her state²; but, in best time,
We will require her welcome.

Lady M. Pronounce it for me, sir, to all our
friends;
For my heart speaks, they are welcome.

Enter first Murderer, to the door.

Macb. See, they encounter thee with their hearts'
thanks:—

Both sides are even: Here I'll sit i'the midst:
Be large in mirth; anon, we'll drink a measure
The table round.—There's blood upon thy face.

Mur. 'Tis Banquo's then.

Macb. 'Tis better thee without, than he within³.
Is he despatch'd?

Mur. My lord, his throat is cut: that I did for
him.

Macb. Thou art the best o'the cut-throats: Yet
he's good,
That did the like for Fleance: if thou didst it,
Thou art the nonpareil.

Mur. Most royal sir,
Fleance is 'scap'd.

Macb. Then comes my fit again: I had else been
perfect;

Whole as the marble, founded as the rock;
As broad, and general, as the casing air:
But now, I am cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd, bound in
To saucy doubts and fears. But Banquo's safe?

Mur. Ay, my good lord: safe in a ditch he bides,

² 'Keeps her state,' continues in her chair of state. A state was a royal chair with a canopy over it.

³ 'Tis better thee without than he within,' that is, I am better pleased that the blood of Banquo should be on thy face than in his body. He is put for him.

With twenty trenched⁴ gashes on his head;
The least a death to nature.

Macb. Thanks for that:—
There the grown serpent lies; the worm, that's fled,
Hath nature that in time will venom breed,
No teeth for the present. — Get thee gone: to-morrow
We'll hear ourselves again. [*Exit Murderer.*

Lady M. My royal lord,
You do not give the cheer: the feast is sold,
That is not often vouch'd, while 'tis a making,
'Tis given with welcome: To feed were best at home;
From thence, the sauce to meat is ceremony;
Meeting were bare without it.

Macb. Sweet remembrancer!—
Now, good digestion wait on appetite,
And health on both!

Len. May it please your highness sit?
[*The Ghost of BANQUO rises, and sits in
MACBETH'S place.*

Macb. Here had we now our country's honour
roof'd,
Were the grac'd person of our Banquo present;
Who may I rather challenge for unkindness,
Than pity for mischance⁵!

Rosse. His absence, sir,
Lays blame upon his promise. Please it your high-
ness
To grace us with your royal company?

Macb. The table's full.

Len. Here's a place reserv'd, sir.

⁴ 'With twenty trenched gashes on his head.' From the French *trancher*, to cut. So in Arden of Feversham:—

'Is deeply trenched on my blushing brow.'

Again, in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*:—

'———like a figure

Trenched in ice.'

⁵ Macbeth betrays himself by an overacted regard for Banquo, of whose absence from the feast he affects to complain, that he may not be suspected of knowing the cause, though at the same time he very unguardedly drops an allusion to that cause. *May* I seems to imply here a wish, not an assertion.

Macb. Where?

Len. Here, my good lord. What is't that moves your highness?

Macb. Which of you have done this?

Lords. What, my good lord?

Macb. Thou canst not say, I did it: never shake Thy gory locks at me.

Rosse. Gentlemen, rise; his highness is not well.

Lady M. Sit, worthy friends:—my lord is often thus,

And hath been from his youth: 'pray you, keep seat; The fit is momentary; upon a thought⁶

He will again be well: If much you note him, You shall offend him, and extend his passion⁷; Feed, and regard him not.—Are you a man?

Macb. Ay, and a bold one, that dare look on that Which might appal the devil.

Lady M. O proper stuff!

This is the very painting of your fear:

This is the air-drawn dagger, which, you said, Led you to Duncan. O, these flaws⁸, and starts (Impostors to⁹ true fear), would well become A woman's story at a winter's fire,

Authoriz'd by her grandam. Shame itself!

Why do you make such faces? When all's done, You look but on a stool.

⁶ i. e. as speedily as *thought* can be exerted. So in King Henry IV. Part I.: 'and *with a thought*, seven of the eleven I paid.'

⁷ i. e. prolong his suffering, make his fit longer.

⁸ *Flaws* are sudden gusts.

⁹ 'Impostors to true fear.' Warburton's learning serves him not here; his explanation is erroneous. Malone idly suggests that *to* may be used for *of*. Mason has hit the meaning, though his way of accounting for it is wrong. It seems strange that none of the commentators should be aware that this was a form of *elliptic* expression, commonly used even at this day in the phrase, 'this is nothing *to* them,' i. e. *in comparison* to them. We have it again in *Romeo and Juliet*:—'My will *to* her consent is but a part,' i. e. is but a part *in comparison* to her consent. Antony Huish, in his *Priscianus Ephebus*, 1668, says:—'The English do eclipse many words which the Latines would to be expressed, e. g.—There is no enemy—to him we foster in our bosom, i. e. *like to* or *compared to*.' Thus in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, p. 120:—'There is no woe *to* his correction.'

Macb. Pr'ythee, see there! behold! look! lo!
how say you?—

Why, what care I? If thou canst nod, speak too.—
If charnel-houses, and our graves, must send
Those that we bury, back, our monuments
Shall be the maws of kites¹⁰. [*Ghost disappears.*]

Lady M. What! quite unmann'd in folly?

Macb. If I stand here, I saw him.

Lady M. Fye, for shame!

Macb. Blood hath been shed ere now, i'the olden
time,

Ere human statute purg'd the gentle weal;
Ay, and since too, murders have been perform'd
Too terrible for the ear: the times have been,
That, when the brains were out, the man would die,
And there an end: but now, they rise again,
With twenty mortal murders on their crowns,
And push us from our stools: This is more strange
Than such a murder is.

Lady M. My worthy lord,
Your noble friends do lack you.

Macb. I do forget:—
Do not muse¹¹ at me, my most worthy friends;
I have a strange infirmity, which is nothing
To those that know me. Come, love and health to all;
Then I'll sit down:—Give me some wine, fill full:
I drink to the general joy of the whole table,

Ghost rises.

And to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss;
'Would, he were here! to all, and him, we thirst,
And all to all¹².

¹⁰ The same thought occurs in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, b. ii. c. viii. :—

'Be not entombed in the raven or the kight.'

¹¹ Shakspeare uses to *muse* for to *wonder*, to be in *amaze*. So in *King Henry IV.* Part ii. Act iv. :—

'I *muse*, you make so slight a question.'
and in *All's Well that Ends Well* :—

'And rather *muse* than ask why I entreat you.'

¹² That is 'we *desire to drink*' all good wishes to all.

Lords. Our duties, and the pledge.

Macb. Avaunt! and quit my sight! Let the earth
hide thee!

Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold;
Thou hast no speculation¹³ in those eyes
Which thou dost glare with!

Lady M. Think of this, good peers,
But as a thing of custom: 'tis no other;
Only it spoils the pleasure of the time.

Macb. What man dare, I dare:
Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear,
The arm'd rhinoceros, or the Hyrcan tiger¹⁴,
Take any shape but that, and my firm nerves
Shall never tremble: Or, be alive again,
And dare me to the desert with thy sword:
If trembling I inhabit¹⁵ then, protest me
The baby of a girl. Hence, horrible shadow!

[*Ghost disappears.*]

Unreal mockery, hence!—Why, so;—being gone,
I am a man again.—'Pray you, sit still.

Lady M. You have displac'd the mirth, broke the
good meeting,
With most admir'd disorder.

Macb. Can such things be,

¹³ 'Thou hast no speculation in those eyes.' Bullokar in his *Expositor*, 1616, explains '*Speculation*, the inward knowledge, or *beholding* of a thing.' Thus in the 115th Psalm:—'eyes have they, but see not.'

¹⁴ *Hyrcan* for *Hyrcanian* was the mode of expression at that time.

¹⁵ Pope changed *inhabit*, the reading of the old copy, to *inhibit*, and Steevens altered *then* to *thee*, so that in the late editions this line runs:—

'If trembling I *inhibit* thee, protest me
The baby of a girl.'

To *inhibit* is to *forbid*, a meaning which will not suit with the context of the passage. The original text is sufficiently plain, and much in Shakspeare's manner. 'Dare me to the desert with thy sword; if then I do not meet thee there; if trembling I stay in my castle, or any *habitation*; if I then hide my head, or *dwell* in any place through fear, protest me the baby of a girl.' If it had not been for the meddling of Pope and others, this passage would have hardly required a note.

And overcome¹⁶ us like a summer's cloud,
 Without our special wonder? You make me strange
 Even to the disposition that I owe¹⁷,
 When now I think, you can behold such sights¹⁸,
 And keep the natural ruby of your cheeks,
 When mine are blanch'd with fear.

Rosse. What sights, my lord?

Lady M. I pray you, speak not; he grows worse
 and worse;

Question enrages him: at once, good night:—
 Stand not upon the order of your going,
 But go at once.

Len. Good night, and better health
 Attend his majesty!

Lady M. A kind good night to all!
 [*Exeunt Lords and Attendants.*]

Macb. It will have blood; they say, blood will
 have blood;

Stones have been known to move, and trees to
 speak;

Augures¹⁹, and understood relations have,
 By magot-pies, and choughs, and rooks, brought forth
 The secret'st man of blood.—What is the night?

Lady M. Almost at odds with morning, which is
 which.

¹⁶ 'Overcome us,' pass over us without wonder, as a casual summer's cloud passes, unregarded.

¹⁷ i. e. possess.

¹⁸ 'You strike me with amazement, make me scarce know myself, now when I think that you can behold such sights unmoved, &c.'

¹⁹ i. e. *auguries*, divinations; formerly spelt *augures*, as appears by Florio in voce *augurio*. By *understood relations*, probably, connected circumstances relating to the crime are meant. I am inclined to think that the passage should be pointed thus:—

'Stones have been known to move, and trees to speak
 Augures; and understood relations have
 By magot-pies, and choughs, and rooks, brought forth
 The secret'st man of blood.'

In all the modern editions we have it erroneously *augurs*. *Magot-pie* is the original name of the *maggie*: stories, such as Shakspeare alludes to, are to be found in Lupton's *Thousand Notable Things*, and in Goulart's *Admirable Histories*.

Macb. How say'st thou²⁰, that Macduff denies
his person,
At our great bidding?

Lady M. Did you send to him, sir?

Macb. I hear it by the way; but I will send:
There's not a one of them, but in his house
I keep a servant fee'd. I will to-morrow
(And betimes I will), to the weird sisters:
More shall they speak; for now I am bent to know,
By the worst means, the worst: for mine own good,
All causes shall give way: I am in blood
Stept in so far, that, should I wade no more,
Returning were as tedious as go o'er:

Strange things I have in head, that will to hand:
Which must be acted, ere they may be scann'd²¹.

Lady M. You lack the season²² of all natures,
sleep.

Mac. Come, we'll to sleep: My strange and self-
abuse

Is the initiate fear, that wants hard use:—

We are yet but young in deed²³. [Exeunt.

²⁰ i. e. *what* say'st thou *to this circumstance*? Thus in Macbeth's address to his wife on the first appearance of Banquo's ghost:—

‘——behold! look! lo! *how say you?*’

So again in Othello, when the Duke is informed that the Turkish fleet was making for Rhodes, which he supposed to have been bound for Cyprus, he says:—

‘*How say you by this change?*’

Again in the Two Gentlemen of Verona, Speed says, ‘But, Launce, *how say'st thou*, that my master is become a notable lover?’

²¹ i. e. examined nicely.

²² ‘You lack the season of all nature's sleep.’ Johnson explains this ‘*You want sleep*, which seasons or gives the relish to *all natures*.’ Indiget somni vitae condimenti. So in All's Well that Ends Well: ‘Tis the best brine a maiden can season her praise in.’ It has, however, been suggested that the meaning is, ‘You stand in need of the time or season of sleep which all natures require.’ I incline to the last interpretation.

²³ The editions previous to Theobald's read:—

‘We're but young *indeed*’

The *initiate fear* is the fear that always attends the first initiation into guilt, before the mind becomes callous and insensible by *hard use* or frequent repetition of it.

SCENE V. *The Heath. Thunder.*

Enter HECATE¹, meeting the three Witches.

1 *Witch.* Why, how now, Hecate? you look angrily.

Hec. Have I not reason, beldams, as you are, Saucy, and overbold? How did you dare To trade and traffick with Macbeth, . In riddles, and affairs of death; And I, the mistress of your charms, The close contriver of all harms, Was never call'd to bear my part, Or show the glory of our art? And, which is worse, all you have done Hath been but for a wayward son, Spiteful, and wrathful; who, as others do, Loves for his own ends, not for you. But make amends now: Get you gone, And at the pit of Acheron Meet me i' the morning; thither he Will come to know his destiny.

¹ Shakspeare has been unjustly censured for introducing Hecate among the vulgar witches, and consequently for confounding ancient with modern superstitions. But the poet has elsewhere shown himself well acquainted with the classical connexion which this deity had with witchcraft. Reginald Scot, in his *Discovery*, mentions it as the common opinion of all writers, that witches were supposed to have nightly 'meetings with Herodias and the Pagan gods,' and that 'in the night time they ride abroad with *Diana*, the goddess of the Pagans,' &c. Their dame or chief leader seems always to have been an old Pagan, as 'the Ladie Sibylla, Minerva, or Diana.' In Middleton's *Witch*, Hecate is the name of one of his witches, and she has a son a low buffoon. In Jonson's *Sad Sheperd*, Act ii. Sc. 3, Maudlin the witch calls *Hecate* the mistress of witches, 'Our dame *Hecate*.' Shakspeare no doubt knew that *Diana* was the name by which the goddess was invoked in modern times, but has preferred her former appellation. Our great poet is not alone in the illegitimate pronunciation of *Hecate* as a dissyllable. Marlowe, who was a scholar, has also thus used it in his *Dr. Faustus*:—

'Pluto's blew fire and *Hecat's* tree
With magic spells encompass thee.'

Jonson also, in the passage above cited, and even Milton, in his *Comus*, have taken the same liberty:—

'Stay thy cloudy ebon chair
Wherein thou rid'st with *Hecat*, and befriend us,' &c.

Your vessels, and your spells, provide,
 Your charms, and every thing beside;
 I am for the air; this night I'll spend
 Unto a dismal and a fatal end.
 Great business must be wrought ere noon:
 Upon the corner of the moon
 There hangs a vaporous drop profound²;
 I'll catch it ere it come to ground:
 And that, distill'd by magic slights³,
 Shall raise such artificial sprights,
 As, by the strength of their illusion,
 Shall draw him on to his confusion:
 He shall spurn fate, scorn death, and bear
 His hopes 'bove wisdom, grace, and fear:
 And you all know, security
 Is mortal's chiefest enemy.

Song. [*Within.*] *Come away, come away, &c.*⁴
 Hark, I am call'd; my little spirit, see,
 Sits in a foggy cloud, and stays for me. [*Exit.*]

1 *Witch.* Come, let's make haste; she'll soon be
 back again. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI. Fores. *A Room in the Palace.*

Enter LENOX and another Lord.

Len. My former speeches have but hit your
 thoughts,

² Steevens remarks that Shakspeare's mythological knowledge on this occasion appears to have deserted him; for as *Hecate* is only one of three names belonging to the same goddess, she could not properly be employed in one character to catch a drop that fell from her in another. In a *Midsummer Night's Dream*, however, the poet was sufficiently aware of her threefold capacity:—

‘—fairies, that do run
 By the triple Hecat's team.’

The *vaporous drop profound* seems to have been meant for the same as the *virus lunare* of the ancients, being a foam which the moon was supposed to shed on particular herbs, or other objects, when strongly solicited by enchantment. Lucan introduces Erichtho using it, lib. vi. 669:—

‘—Et virus large lunare ministrat.’

³ *Slights* are arts, subtle practices.

⁴ This song is to be found entire in *The Witch*, by Middleton.

Which can interpret further: only, I say,
Things have been strangely borne: The gracious
Duncan

Was pitied of Macbeth:—marry, he was dead:—
And the right-valiant Banquo walk'd too late;
Whom, you may say, if it please you, Fleance kill'd,
For Fleance fled. Men must not walk too late.
Who cannot¹ want the thought, how monstrous
It was for Malcolm, and for Donalbain,
To kill their gracious father? damned fact!
How it did grieve Macbeth! did he not straight,
In pious rage, the two delinquents tear,
That were the slaves of drink, and thralls of sleep?
Was not that nobly done? Ay, and wisely too;
For 'twould have anger'd any heart alive,
To hear the men deny it. So that, I say,
He has borne all things well: and I do think,
That, had he Duncan's sons under his key
(As, an't please heaven, he shall not), they should
find

What 'twere to kill a father; so should Fleance.
But, peace!—for from broad words, and 'cause he
fail'd

His presence at the tyrant's feast, I hear,
Macduff lives in disgrace: Sir, can you tell
Where he bestows himself?

Lord. The son of Duncan,
From whom this tyrant holds the due of birth,
Lives in the English court; and is receiv'd
Of the most pious Edward with such grace,
That the malevolence of fortune nothing
Takes from his high respect: Thither Macduff
Is gone to pray the holy king, upon his aid
To wake Northumberland, and warlike Siward:
That, by the help of these (with Him above
To ratify the work), we may again

¹ Who cannot want the thought, &c. The sense requires who can want the thought; but it is, probably, a lapse of the poet's pen.

Give to our tables meat, sleep to our nights;
 Free from our feasts and banquets bloody knives²;
 Do faithful homage, and receive free honours³,
 All which we pine for now: And this report
 Hath so exasperate⁴ the king, that he
 Prepares for some attempt of war.

Len. Sent he to Macduff?

Lord. He did: and with an absolute, *Sir, not I,*
 The cloudy messenger turns me his back,
 And hums; as who should say, *You'll rue the time*
That clogs me with this answer.

Len. And that well might
 Advise him to a caution, to hold what distance
 His wisdom can provide. Some holy angel
 Fly to the court of England, and unfold
 His message ere he come; that a swift blessing
 May soon return to this our suffering country
 Under a hand accurs'd⁵!

Lord. I'll send my prayers with him!

[*Exeunt.*]

² 'Free from our feasts and banquets bloody knives.' The construction is:—'Free our feasts and banquets from bloody knives.'

³ Johnson says, '*Free* may be either honours *freely bestowed*, not purchased by crimes; or honours *without slavery*, without dread of a tyrant.' I have shown in a note on *Twelfth Night*, Act ii. Sc. 4, p. 311, that *free* meant *pure, chaste*, consequently *unspotted*, which may be its meaning here. *Free* also meant *noble*. See note on the Second Part of King Henry VI. Act iii. Sc. 1.

⁴ *Exasperate*, for exasperated.

⁵ '—————to this our suffering country
 Under a hand accursed.'

The construction is 'to this our country, suffering under a hand accursed.'

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

A dark Cave. In the middle, a Cauldron boiling.

*Thunder. Enter the three Witches*¹.

1 Witch. Thrice the brinded cat hath mew'd.

2 Witch. Thrice; and once the hedge-pig whin'd².

3 Witch. Harper cries:—'Tis time, 'tis time.

1 Witch. Round about the cauldron go;

In the poison'd entrails throw.—

Toad, that under coldest³ stone,

Days and nights hast thirty-one

Swelter'd⁴ venom, sleeping got,

Boil thou first i' the charmed pot!

All. Double, double toil and trouble;

Fire, burn; and, cauldron, bubble.

2 Witch. Fillet of a fenny snake,

In the cauldron boil and bake:

Eye of newt, and toe of frog,

Wool of bat, and tongue of dog,

Adder's fork, and blind-worm's⁵ sting,

¹ '*Enter the three Witches.*' Dr. Johnson has called the reader's attention to the 'judgment with which Shakspeare has selected all the circumstances of his infernal ceremonies, and how exactly he has conformed to common opinions and traditions.'

² 'Thrice; and once the hedge-pig whin'd.' The urchin or hedgehog, like the toad, for its solitariness, the ugliness of its appearance, and from a popular belief that it sucked or poisoned the udders of cows, was adopted into the demonologic system; and its shape was sometimes supposed to be assumed by mischievous elves. Hence it was one of the plagues of Caliban in the *Tempest*.

³ 'Coldest stone.' The old copy reads 'cold stone;' the emendation is Steevens's. Mr. Boswell thinks that the alteration was unnecessary. See his *Essay on Shakspeare's Versification*.

⁴ *Sweltered*. This word is employed to signify that the animal was moistened with its own cold exudations. So in the twenty-second song of Drayton's *Polyolbion*:

'And all the knights there dubb'd the morning but before,
The evening sun beheld there *sweltered* in their gore.'

⁵ The *blind-worm* is the *slow-worm*. Thus in Drayton's *Noah's Flood*:—

'The small eyed *slow-worm* held of many *blind*.

Lizard's leg, and owlet's wing,
For a charm of powerful trouble,
Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.

All. Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire, burn; and, cauldron, bubble.

3 Witch. Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf;
Witch's mummy; maw and gulf⁶
Of the ravin'd⁷ salt-sea shark;
Root of hemlock, digg'd i' the dark;
Liver of blaspheming Jew;
Gall of goat; and slips of yew,
Sliver'd⁸ in the moon's eclipse;
Nose of Turk, and Tartar's lips;
Finger of birth-strangled babe,
Ditch-deliver'd by a drab,
Make the gruel thick and slab:
Add thereto a tiger's chaudron⁹,
For the ingredients of our cauldron.

All. Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire, burn; and, cauldron, bubble.

2 Witch. Cool it with a baboon's blood,
Then the charm is firm and good.

Enter HECATE, and the other three Witches.

Hec. O, well done! I commend your pains;
And every one shall share i' the gains.
And now about the cauldron sing,
Like elves and fairies in a ring,
Enchanting all that you put in.

⁶ *Gulf*, the throat.

⁷ To *ravin* according to Minshew is to devour, to eat greedily. *Ravin'd*, therefore, may be glutted with prey. Unless, with Malone, we suppose that Shakspeare used *ravin'd* for *ravenous*, the passive participle for the adjective. In Horman's *Vulgaria*, 1519, occurs 'Thou art a *ravenar* of *delycatis*.'

⁸ *Sliver* is a common word in the north, where it means to cut a piece or slice. Again in *King Lear* :—

'She who herself will *sliver* and disbranch.'

⁹ i. e. *entrails*; a word formerly in common use in books of cookery, in one of which, printed in 1597, is a receipt to make a pudding of a calf's *chaldron*.

SONG¹⁰.

*Black spirits and white,
Red spirits and gray;
Mingle, mingle, mingle,
You that mingle may.*

2 Witch. By the pricking of my thumbs¹¹,
Something wicked this way comes:——
Open, locks, whoever knocks.

Enter MACBETH.

Macb. How now, you secret, black, and midnight
hags?

What is't you do?

All. A deed without a name.

Macb. I conjure you, by that which you profess
(Howe'er you come to know it), answer me:

Though you untie the winds, and let them fight
Against the churches; though the yesty¹² waves
Confound and swallow navigation up;
Though bladed corn be lodg'd¹³, and trees blown
down;

Though castles topple¹⁴ on their warders' heads;
Though palaces, and pyramids, do slope
Their heads to their foundations; though the treasure
Of nature's germins¹⁵ tumble all together,
Even till destruction sicken, answer me
To what I ask you.

1 Witch. Speak.

¹⁰ 'Black spirits and white.' The original edition of this play only contains the two first words of this song; the entire stanza is found in *The Witch*, by Middleton, and is there called 'A charme Song about a Vessel.'

¹¹ 'By the pricking of my thumbs.' It is a very ancient superstition, that all sudden pains of the body, and other sensations which could not naturally be accounted for, were presages of somewhat that was shortly to happen.

¹² i. e. foaming, frothy.

¹³ i. e. laid flat by wind or rain.

¹⁴ *Topple*, tumble.

¹⁵ *Germins*, seeds which have begun to sprout or germinate.

2 *Witch.*

Demand.

3 *Witch.*

We'll answer.

1 *Witch.* Say, if thou'dst rather hear it from our mouths,

Or from our masters'?

Macb.

Call them, let me see them.

1 *Witch.* Pour in sow's blood, that hath eaten
Her nine farrow¹⁶; grease, that's sweaten
From the murderer's gibbet, throw
Into the flame.

All.

Come, high, or low:

Thyself, and office, deftly¹⁷ show.

Thunder. An Apparition of an armed Head rises¹⁸.

Macb. Tell me, thou unknown power,——

1 *Witch.*

He knows thy thought;

Hear his speech, but say thou nought¹⁹.

App. Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth! beware
Macduff;

Beware the thane of Fife.—Dismiss me:—Enough²⁰.
[*Descends.*]

¹⁶ 'Pour in sow's blood, that hath eaten
Her nine farrow.'

Shakspeare probably caught this idea from the laws of Kenneth II. king of Scotland:—'If a sow *eate hir pigges*, let hyr be stoned to death and buried, that no man *eate of hyr flesh*.'—*Holinshed's History of Scotland*, ed. 1577, p. 181.

¹⁷ *Deftly* is adroitly, dexterously.

¹⁸ The armed head represents symbolically Macbeth's head cut off and brought to Malcolm by Macduff. The bloody child is Macduff, untimely ripped from his mother's womb. The child, with a crown on his head and a bough in his hand, is the royal Malcolm, who ordered his soldiers to hew them down a bough, and bear it before them to Dunsinane.

¹⁹ Silence was necessary during all incantations. So in Dr. Faustus:—

'Your grace demand no questions,
But in dumb *silence* let them come and go.'

And in *The Tempest*:—

'—be *mute*, or else our spell is marr'd.'

²⁰ Spirits thus evoked were supposed to be impatient of being questioned. The spirit in the Second Part of King Henry the VIth, Act iv. Sc. 1, says:—

'Ask what thou wilt:—That I had said and done.'

Macb. Whate'er thou art, for thy good caution,
thanks;
Thou hast harp'd²¹ my fear aright:—But one word
more:—

1 Witch. He will not be commanded: Here's
another,
More potent than the first.

Thunder. *An Apparition of a bloody Child rises.*

App. Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth!—

Macb. Had I three ears, I'd hear thee²².

App. Be bloody, bold,
And resolute: laugh to scorn the power of man,
For none of woman born shall harm Macbeth²³.

[*Descends.*

Macb. Then live, Macduff; What need I fear of
thee?

But yet I'll make assurance double sure,
And take a bond of fate: thou shalt not live;
That I may tell pale hearted fear, it lies,
And sleep in spite of thunder.—What is this,

Thunder. *An Apparition of a Child crowned, with
a Tree in his Hand, rises.*

That rises like the issue of a king;
And wears upon his baby brow the round
And top of sovereignty²⁴?

All. Listen, but speak not to't.

App. Be lion-mettled, proud; and take no care
Who chafes, who frets, or where conspirers are;

²¹ *Harp'd*, touched on a passion as a harper touches a string.

²² 'Had I three ears, I'd hear thee.' This singular expression probably means no more than 'I will listen to thee with all attention.'

²³ 'For none of woman born shall harm Macbeth.' So Holinshed:—'And surely hereupon he had put Macduff to death, but that a certeine witch, whom he had in great trust, had told him, that he should never be slaine with man borne of anie woman, nor vanquished till the wood of Bernane came to the castle of Dunsinane. This phrophecy put all fear out of his heart.'

²⁴ The *round* is that part of a crown which encircles the head: the *top* is the ornament which rises above it.

Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be, until
Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill²⁵
Shall come against him. [*Descends.*

Macb. That will never be;
Who can impress the forest²⁶; bid the tree
Unfix his earth-bound root? sweet bodements!
good!

Rebellious head²⁷, rise never, till the wood
Of Birnam rise, and our high-plac'd Macbeth
Shall live the lease of nature, pay his breath
To time, and mortal custom.—Yet my heart
Throbs to know one thing; Tell me (if your art
Can tell so much), shall Banquo's issue ever
Reign in this kingdom?

All. Seek to know no more.

Macb. I will be satisfied: deny me this,
And an eternal curse fall on you! Let me know:—
Why sinks that cauldron? and what noise²⁸ is this?
[*Hautboys.*

1 *Witch.* Show! 2 *Witch.* Show! 3 *Witch.* Show!

All. Show his eyes, and grieve his heart²⁹;
Come like shadows, so depart.

²⁵ The present accent of *Dunsinane* is right. In every subsequent instance the accent is misplaced. Thus in Hervey's *Life of King Robert Bruce*, 1729, which Ritson thinks a good authority:—

'Whose deeds let Birnam and *Dunsinnan* tell,
When Canmore battled and the villain fell.'

Andrew of Wyntoun uses both accents.

Prophecies of apparent impossibilities were common in Scotland; such as the removal of one place to another, &c. Thus Sir D. Lindsay:—

'Quhen the Bas and the Isle of May
Beis set upon the Mount Sinay,
Quhen the Lowmound besides Falkland
Be liftit to Northumberland.'

²⁶ i. e. command it to serve him like a soldier impressed.

²⁷ 'Rebellious head.' The old copy reads *dead*; the emendation is Theobald's.

²⁸ *Noise* in our old poets is often literally synonymous for *music*. Vide a note on the Second Part of King Henry IV. Act ii. Sc. 4.

²⁹ 'Show his eyes, and grieve his heart.' And the man of thine, whom I shall not cut off from mine altar, shall be to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart.—1 Samuel, ii. 33.

Eight Kings appear, and pass over the Stage in order; the last with a Glass in his Hand; Banquo following.

Macb. Thou art too like the spirit of Banquo;
down!

Thy crown does sear mine eyeballs:—And thy hair,
Thou other gold-bound brow, is like the first:—
A third is like the former:—Filthy hags!

Why do you show me this?—A fourth?—Start,
eyes!

What! will the line stretch out to the crack of
doom³⁰?

Another yet?—A seventh?—I'll see no more:—

And yet the eighth appears, who bears a glass³¹,
Which shows me many more; and some I see,
That twofold balls and treble sceptres carry³²:

Horrible sight!—Now, I see, 'tis true;

For the blood-bolter'd³³ Banquo smiles upon me,
And points at them for his.—What, is this so?

³⁰ i. e. the dissolution of nature. *Crack* and *crash* were formerly synonymous.

³¹ This method of juggling prophecy is referred to in *Measure for Measure*, Act ii. Sc. 8:—

‘———and like a prophet

Looks in a glass, and shows me future evils.’

In an extract from the Penal Laws against witches, it is said ‘they do answer either by voice, or else set before their eyes in glasses chrysal stones, &c. the picture or images of the persons or things sought for.’ Spenser has given a circumstantial account of the glass which Merlin made for King Ryence.—*Faerie Queene*, b. iii. c. 2. A mirror of the same kind was presented to Cambuscan, in the Squire's Tale of Chaucer: and we are told that ‘a certaine philosopher did the like to Pompey, the which shewed him in a glasse the order of his enemies march.’—*Boisteau's Theatrum Mundi*, translated by John Alday, b. l. no date.

³² ‘That twofold balls and treble sceptres carry.’ This was intended as a compliment to James the First: he first united the two islands and the three kingdoms under one head, whose house too was said to be descended from Banquo, who is therefore represented not only as innocent, but as a noble character; whereas, according to history, he was confederate with Macbeth in the murder of Duncan.

³³ In Warwickshire, when a horse, sheep, or other animal, perspires much, and any of the hair or wool, in consequence of such perspiration, or any redundant humour, becomes matted into tufts with grime and sweat, he is said to be *boltered*; and whenever the blood issues out and coagulates, forming the locks

1 *Witch.* Ay, sir, all this is so:—But why
 Stands Macbeth thus amazedly? —
 Come, sisters, cheer we up his sprights³⁴,
 And show the best of our delights;
 I'll charm the air to give a sound,
 While you perform your antique³⁵ round:
 That this great king may kindly say,
 Our duties did his welcome pay.

[*Music. The Witches dance, and vanish.*]

Macb. Where are they? Gone?—Let this per-
 nicious hour
 Stand aye accursed in the calendar!—
 Come in, without there!

Enter LENOX.

Len. What's your grace's will?

Macb. Saw you the weird sisters?

Len. No, my lord.

Macb. Came they not by you?

Len. No, indeed, my lord.

Macb. Infected be the air whereon they ride;
 And damn'd all those that trust them!—I did hear
 The galloping of horse: Who was't came by?

Len. 'Tis two or three, my lord, that bring you
 word,

Macduff is fled to England.

Macb. Fled to England?

Len. Ay, my good lord.

Macb. Time, thou anticipat'st³⁶ my dread exploits:
 The flighty purpose never is o'ertook,
 Unless the deed go with it: From this moment,

into hard clotted bunches, the beast is said to be *blood-boltered*. When a boy has a broken head, so that his hair is matted together with blood, his head is said to be *boltered* [pronounced *baltered*]. The word *baltereth* is used in this sense by Philemon Holland in his Translation of Pliny's Natural History, 1601, b. xii. c. xvii. p. 370. It is therefore applicable to Banquo, who had 'twenty trenched gashes on his head.'

³⁴ i. e. *spirits*. It should seem that *spirits* was almost always pronounced *sprights* or *sprites* by Shakspeare's cotemporaries.

³⁵ *Antique* was the old spelling for *antick*.

³⁶ i. e. preventest them, by taking away the opportunity.

The very firstlings of my heart shall be
The firstlings of my hand. And even now
To crown my thoughts with acts, be it thought and
done:

The castle of Macduff I will surprise;
Seize upon Fife; give to the edge o'the sword
His wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls
That trace³⁷ him in his line. No boasting like a fool:
This deed I'll do, before this purpose cool:
But no more sights!—Where are these gentlemen?
Come, bring me where they are. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. Fife. *A Room in Macduff's Castle.*

Enter LADY MACDUFF, her Son, and Rosse.

L. Macd. What had he done, to make him fly the
land?

Rosse. You must have patience, madam.

L. Macd. He had none;
His flight was madness: When our actions do not,
Our fears do make us traitors¹.

Rosse. You know not,
Whether it was his wisdom, or his fear.

L. Macd. Wisdom! to leave his wife, to leave
his babes,
His mansion, and his titles, in a place
From whence himself does fly? He loves us not;
He wants the natural touch²: for the poor wren,
The most diminutive of birds, will fight,
Her young ones in her nest, against the owl.
All is the fear, and nothing is the love;
As little is the wisdom, where the flight
So runs against all reason.

Rosse. My dearest coz',
I pray you, school yourself: But, for your husband,

³⁷ i. e. follow, succeed in it.

¹ 'Our fears do make us traitors.' Our flight is considered as evidence of our treason.

² *Natural touch*, natural affection.

He is noble, wise, judicious, and best knows
The fits o'the season³. I dare not speak much
further:

But cruel are the times, when we are traitors,
And do not know ourselves; when we hold rumour
From what we fear, yet know not what we fear⁴;
But float upon a wild and violent sea,
Each way, and move.—I take my leave of you:
Shall not be long but I'll be here again:
Things at the worst will cease, or else climb upward
To what they were before.—My pretty cousin,
Blessing upon you!

L. Macd. Father'd he is, and yet he's fatherless.

Rosse. I am so much a fool, should I stay longer,
It would be my disgrace, and your discomfort:
I take my leave at once. [*Exit Rosse.*]

L. Macd. Sirrah⁵, your father's dead;
And what will you do now? How will you live?

Son. As birds do, mother.

L. Macd. What, with worms and flies?

Son. With what I get, I mean; and so do they.

L. Macd. Poor bird! thou'dst never fear the net,
nor lime,
The pit-fall, nor the gin.

³ *The fits o' the season* should appear to be the violent disorders of the season, its convulsions: as we still say figuratively *the temper of the times*. So in *Coriolanus*:—

‘————but that

'The violent fit o' th' times craves it as physic.'

⁴ ‘The best I can make of this passage is,’ says Steevens:—
‘The times are cruel when our fears induce us to believe, or take for granted, what we hear rumoured or reported abroad; and yet at the same time, as we live under a tyrannical government, where *will* is substituted for *law*, we know not what we have to fear, because we know not when we offend.’ Or, ‘when we are led by our fears to believe every rumour of danger we hear, yet are not conscious to ourselves of any crime for which we should be disturbed with fears.’ A passage like this occurs in *King John*:—

‘Possess'd with rumours, full of idle dreams,
Not knowing what they fear, but full of fear.’

⁵ *Sirrah* was not in our author's time a term of reproach, but sometimes used by masters to servants, parents to children, &c.

Son. Why should I, mother? Poor birds they are not set for.

My father is not dead, for all your saying.

L. Macd. Yes, he is dead; how wilt thou do for a father?

Son. Nay, how will you do for a husband?

L. Macd. Why, I can buy me twenty at any market.

Son. Then you'll buy 'em to sell again.

L. Macd. Thou speak'st with all thy wit; and yet i'faith,

With wit enough for thee.

Son. Was my father a traitor, mother?

L. Macd. Ay, that he was.

Son. What is a traitor?

L. Macd. Why, one that swears and lies.

Son. And be all traitors, that do so?

L. Macd. Every one that does so, is a traitor, and must be hanged.

Son. And must they all be hanged, that swear and lie?

L. Macd. Every one.

Son. Who must hang them?

L. Macd. Why, the honest men.

Son. Then the liars and swearers are fools: for there are liars and swearers enough to beat the honest men, and hang up them.

L. Macd. Now, God help thee, poor monkey! But how wilt thou do for a father?

Son. If he were dead, you'd weep for him: if you would not, it were a good sign that I should quickly have a new father.

L. Macd. Poor prattler! how thou talk'st.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. Bless you, fair dame! I am not to you known,

Though in your state of honour I am perfect⁶.

⁶ i. e. I am perfectly acquainted with your rank.

I doubt, some danger does approach you nearly :
 If you will take a homely man's advice,
 Be not found here; hence, with your little ones.
 To fright you thus, methinks, I am too savage;
 To do worse to you, were fell cruelty,
 Which is too nigh your person. Heaven preserve
 you!

I dare abide no longer. *[Exit Messenger.]*

L. Macd. Whither should I fly?
 I have done no harm. But I remember now
 I am in this earthly world; where, to do harm,
 Is often laudable; to do good, sometime,
 Accounted dangerous folly: Why then, alas!
 Do I put up that womanly defence,
 To say, I have done no harm?—What are these
 faces?

Enter Murderers.

Mur. Where is your husband?

L. Macd. I hope, in no place so unsanctified,
 Where such as thou may'st find him.

Mur. He's a traitor.

Son. Thou ly'st, thou shag-ear'd⁷ villain.

Mur. What, you egg! *[Stabbing him.]*
 Young fry of treachery!

Son. He has killed me, mother;
 Run away, I pray you. *[Dies.]*

*[Exit LADY MACDUFF, crying murder,
 and pursued by the Murderers.]*

⁷ 'Shag-ear'd villain.' It has been suggested that we should read *shag-hair'd*, an abusive epithet frequent in our old plays. *Hair* being formerly spelt *heare*, the corruption would easily arise. In Lodge's *Incarnate Devils of this Age*, 1596, 4to. p. 37, we have it thus: '*shag-heard slave.*'

SCENE III.

England. *A Room in the King's Palace.*

Enter MALCOLM and MACDUFF¹.

Mal. Let us seek out some desolate shade, and there
Weep our sad bosoms empty.

Macd. Let us rather
Hold fast the mortal sword; and, like good men,
Bestride our downfall'n birthdom²: Each new morn,
New widows howl; new orphans cry; new sorrows
Strike heaven on the face, that it resounds
As if it felt with Scotland, and yell'd out
Like syllable of dolour.

Mal. What I believe, I'll wail;
What know, believe; and, what I can redress,
As I shall find the time to friend³, I will.
What you have spoke, it may be so, perchance.
This tyrant, whose sole name blisters our tongues,
Was once thought honest: you have lov'd him well;
He hath not touch'd you yet. I am young; but
something
You may deserve⁴ of him through me; and wisdom

¹ This scene is almost literally taken from Holinshed's Chronicle, which is in this part an abridgment of the chronicle of Hector Boece, as translated by John Bellenden. From the recent reprints of both the Scottish and English chroniclers, quotations from them become the less necessary; they are now accessible to the reader curious in tracing the poet to his sources of information.

² *Birthdom*, for the place of our birth, our native land. Thus in the Second Part of King Henry IV. Morton says:—
'—————he doth *bestride a bleeding land*.'

³ i. e. befriend.

⁴ You may *deserve* of him through me.' The old copy reads *discerne*. The emendation was made by Theobald. In the subsequent part of the line something is wanted to complete the sense. There is no verb to which *wisdom* can refer. Steevens conjectured that the line might originally have run thus:—

'—————but something

You may deserve through me; and wisdom is it
To offer, &c.

To offer up a weak, poor, innocent lamb,
To appease an angry god.

Macd. I am not treacherous.

Mal.

But Macbeth is.

A good and virtuous nature may recoil,
In an imperial charge⁵. But I shall crave your
pardon;

That which you are, my thoughts cannot transpose:
Angels are bright still, though the brightest fell:
Though all things foul would wear the brows of grace,
Yet grace must still look so⁶.

Macd.

I have lost my hopes.

Mal. Perchance, even there, where I did find my
doubts.

Why in that rawness left you wife and child
(Those precious motives, those strong knots of love),
Without leave taking?—I pray you,
Let not my jealousies be your dishonours,
But mine own safeties:—You may be rightly just,
Whatever I shall think.

Macd.

Bleed, bleed, poor country!

Great tyranny, lay thou thy basis sure,
For goodness dares not check thee!—wear thou thy
wrongs;—

The title is affeer'd⁷ —Fare thee well, lord:

⁵ 'A good and virtuous nature may recoil
In an imperial charge.'

A good mind may recede from goodness in the execution of a royal commission.

⁶ This is not very clear. Johnson has thus attempted to explain it: 'My suspicions cannot injure you, if you be virtuous, by supposing that a traitor may put on your virtuous appearance. I do not say that your virtuous appearance proves you a traitor; for virtue must wear its proper form, though that form be counterfeited by villany.' An expression of a similar nature occurs in *Measure for Measure*:—

'—————Good alone

Is good; without a name vileness is so.'

⁷ To *affeer* is a law term, signifying to *assess* or *reduce to certainty*. The meaning therefore may be:—

'The title is confirmed to the usurper.'

My interpretation of the passage is this: 'Bleed, bleed, poor country! Great Tyranny, lay thou thy basis sure, for goodness

I would not be the villain that thou think'st
For the whole space that's in the tyrant's grasp,
And the rich East to boot.

Mal. Be not offended:
I speak not as in absolute fear of you.
I think our country sinks beneath the yoke;
It weeps, it bleeds; and each new day a gash
Is added to her wounds: I think, withal,
There would be hands uplifted in my right;
And here, from gracious England, have I offer
Of goodly thousands: But, for all this,
When I shall tread upon the tyrant's head,
Or wear it on my sword, yet my poor country
Shall have more vices than it had before;
More suffer, and more sundry ways than ever,
By him that shall succeed.

Macd. What should he be?

Mal. It is myself I mean: in whom I know
All the particulars of vice so grafted,
That, when they shall be open'd, black Macbeth
Will seem as pure as snow; and the poor state
Esteem him as a lamb, being compar'd
With my confineless harms⁸.

Macd. Not in the legions
Of horrid hell, can come a devil more damn'd
In evils, to top Macbeth.

Mal. I grant him bloody,
Luxurious⁹, avaricious, false, deceitful,
Sudden¹⁰, malicious, smacking of every sin
That has a name: But there's no bottom, none,
In my voluptuousness: your wives, your daughters,
Your matrons, and your maids, could not fill up

dares not check thee!" Then, addressing Malcolm, Macduff says, 'Wear thou thy wrongs,—the title to thy crown is now confirmed—' to the usurper he would probably have added, but that he interrupts himself with angry impatience, at being suspected of traitorous double dealing.

⁸ i. e. immeasurable evils. Thus in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Act ii. Sc. 2, we have:—

‘——thou unconfinable baseness.’

⁹ *Luxurious*, lascivious.

¹⁰ *Sudden*, passionate.

The cistern of my lust; and my desire
All continent impediments would o'erbear,
That did oppose my will: Better Macbeth,
Than such a one to reign.

Macd. Boundless intemperance
In nature is a tyranny; it hath been
The untimely emptying of the happy throne,
And fall of many kings. But fear not yet
To take upon you what is yours: you may
Convey your pleasures in a spacious plenty,
And yet seem cold, the time you may so hood-wink.
We have willing dames enough; there cannot be
That vulture in you, to devour so many
As will to greatness dedicate themselves,
Finding it so inclin'd.

Mal. With this, there grows,
In my most ill compos'd affection, such
A staunchless avarice, that, were I king,
I should cut off the nobles for their lands;
Desire his jewels, and this other's house:
And my more-having would be as a sauce
To make me hunger more: that I should forge
Quarrels unjust against the good, and loyal,
Destroying them for wealth.

Macd. This avarice
Sticks deeper; grows with more pernicious root
Than summer-seeming lust¹¹: and it hath been
The sword of our slain kings: Yet do not fear;
Scotland hath foysons¹² to fill up your will,
Of your mere own: All these are portable¹³,
With other graces weigh'd.

Mal. But I have none: The king-becoming graces,

¹¹ Sir W. Blackstone proposed to read *summer-seeding*, which was adopted by Steevens; but there appears no reason for change. The meaning of the epithet may be, '*lust as hot as summer*.' In Donne's Poems Malone has pointed out its opposite—*winter-seeming*.

¹² *Foysons*, plenty.

¹³ *Portable* answers exactly to a phrase now in use. Such failings may be *borne with*, or are *bearable*.

As justice, verity, temperance, stableness,
 Bounty, persévérance, mercy, lowliness,
 Devotion, patience, courage, fortitude,
 I have no relish of them; but abound
 In the division of each several crime,
 Acting it many ways. Nay, had I power, I should
 Pour the sweet milk of concord into hell,
 Uproar the universal peace, confound
 All unity on earth.

Macd. O Scotland! Scotland!

Mal. If such a one be fit to govern, speak:
 I am as I have spoken.

Macd. Fit to govern!
 No, not to live.—O nation miserable,
 With an untitled¹⁴ tyrant bloody-sceptred,
 When shalt thou see thy wholesome days again?
 Since that the truest issue of thy throne
 By his own interdiction stands accurs'd,
 And does blaspheme his breed?—Thy royal father
 Was a most sainted king; the queen, that bore thee,
 Oftener upon her knees than on her feet,
 Died every day she lived¹⁵. Fare thee well!
 These evils, thou repeat'st upon thyself,
 Have banish'd me from Scotland.—O, my breast,
 Thy hope ends here!

Mal. Macduff, this noble passion,
 Child of integrity, hath from my soul
 Wip'd the black scruples, reconcil'd my thoughts
 To thy good truth and honour. Devilish Macbeth
 By many of these trains hath sought to win me
 Into his power; and modest wisdom plucks me
 From over-credulous haste¹⁶; But God above

¹⁴ 'With an untitled tyrant.' Thus in Chaucer's *Manciple's Tale*:—

'Right so betwix a *tittleles tiraunt*
 And an outlawe.'

¹⁵ 'Died every day she lived.' The expression is derived from the Sacred Writings:—'I protest by your rejoicing, which I have in Christ Jesus, *I die daily*.'

¹⁶ *Credulus haste*, overhasty credulity.

Deal between thee and me! for even now
 I put myself to thy direction, and
 Unspeak mine own detraction: here abjure
 The taints and blames I laid upon myself,
 For strangers to my nature. I am yet
 Unknown to woman; never was forsworn;
 Scarcely have coveted what was mine own;
 At no time broke my faith; would not betray
 The devil to his fellow; and delight
 No less in truth, than life: my first false speaking
 Was this upon myself: What I am truly,
 Is thine, and my poor country's, to command:
 Whither, indeed, before thy here-approach,
 Old Siward, with ten thousand warlike men,
 All ready at a point, was setting forth:
 Now we'll together; And the chance, of goodness,
 Be like our warranted quarrel! Why are you silent?

Macd. Such welcome and unwelcome things at
 once,
 'Tis hard to reconcile.

Enter a Doctor.

Mal. Well; more anon.—Comes the king forth, I
 pray you?

Doct. Ay, sir: there are a crew of wretched souls,
 That stay his cure: their malady convinces¹⁷
 The great assay of art; but, at his touch,
 Such sanctity hath heaven given his hand,
 They presently amend.

Mal. I thank you, doctor.

[*Exit Doctor.*

Macd. What's the disease he means?

Mal. 'Tis call'd the evil:
 A most miraculous work in this good king;
 Which often, since my here-remain in England,

¹⁷ i. e. overcomes it. We have before seen this word used in the same Latin sense, at p. 222, Act i. Sc. 7, of this play. 'To convince or convicte, to vanquish and overcome. *Evinco.*'
 BARET.

I have seen him do. How he solicits heaven,
Himself best knows: but strangely visited people,
All swoln and ulcerous, pitiful to the eye,
The mere despair of surgery, he cures;
Hanging a golden stamp¹⁸ about their necks,
Put on with holy prayers: and 'tis spoken,
To the succeeding royalty he leaves
The healing benediction. With this strange virtue,
He hath a heavenly gift of prophecy;
And sundry blessings hang about his throne,
That speak him full of grace.

Enter Rosse.

Macd. See, who comes here?

Mal. My countryman; but yet I know him not.

Macd. My ever-gentle cousin, welcome hither.

Mal. I know him now: Good God, betimes remove
The means that make us strangers!

Rosse. Sir, Amen.

Macd. Stands Scotland where it did?

Rosse. Alas, poor country!

Almost afraid to know itself! It cannot
Be call'd our mother, but our grave: where nothing,
But who knows nothing, is once seen to smile;
Where sighs, and groans, and shrieks that rent¹⁹ the
air,

Are made, not mark'd; where violent sorrow seems
A modern ecstasy²⁰; the dead man's knell
Is there scarce ask'd, for who; and good men's lives
Expire before the flowers in their caps,
Dying, or ere they sicken.

¹⁸ *A golden stamp*, the coin called an angel; the value of which was ten shillings.

¹⁹ 'To *rent* is an ancient verb, which has been long disused,' say the editors: in other words it is the old orthography of the verb to *rend*.

²⁰ It has been before observed that Shakspeare uses *ecstasy* for every species of alienation of mind, whether proceeding from sorrow, joy, wonder, or any other exciting cause. *Modern* is generally used by him in the sense of *common*. *A modern ecstasy* is therefore *a common grief*. Vide Act iii. Sc. 2, p. 248.

Macd. O, relation,
Too nice, and yet too true!

Mal. What is the newest grief?

Rosse. That of an hour's age doth hiss the speaker;
Each minute teems a new one.

Macd. How does my wife?

Rosse. Why, well.

Macd. And all my children?

Rosse. Well too²¹.

Macd. The tyrant has not batter'd at their peace?

Rosse. No; they were well at peace, when I did
leave them.

Macd. Be not a niggard of your speech; How
goes it?

Rosse. When I came hither to transport the tidings,
Which I have heavily borne, there ran a rumour
Of many worthy fellows that were out;
Which was to my belief witness'd the rather,
For that I saw the tyrant's power a-foot:
Now is the time of help! your eye in Scotland
Would create soldiers, make our women fight,
To doff²² their dire distresses.

Mal. Be it their comfort,
We are coming thither: gracious England hath
Lent us good Siward, and ten thousand men;
An older, and a better soldier, none
That Christendom gives out.

Rosse. 'Would, I could answer
This comfort with the like! But I have words,
That would be howl'd out in the desert air,
Where hearing should not latch²³ them.

²¹ Thus in *Antony and Cleopatra*:—

'———We use

To say, *the dead are well.*'

²² To *doff* is to do off, to put off.

²³ To *latch* (in the North) signifies the same as to *catch*. Thus also Golding, in his translation of the first book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*:—

'As though he would, at everie stride, betweene his teeth *latch*.'

Again in the eighth book:—

'But that a bough of chesnut-tree, thick leaved, by the way
Did latch it,' &c.

Macd. What concern they?
The general cause? or is it a fee-grief²⁴,
Due to some single breast?

Rosse. No mind, that's honest,
But in it shares some woe; though the main part
Pertains to you alone.

Macd. If it be mine,
Keep it not from me, quickly let me have it.

Rosse. Let not your ears despise my tongue for
ever,
Which shall possess them with the heaviest sound
That ever yet they heard.

Macd. Humph! I guess at it.

Rosse. Your castle is surpris'd; your wife, and
habes,
Savagely slaughter'd: to relate the manner,
Were, on the quarry²⁵ of these murder'd deer,
To add the death of you.

Mal. Merciful heaven!—
What, man! ne'er pull your hat upon your brows,
Give sorrow words: the grief, that does not speak;
Whispers the o'erfraught heart, and bids it break²⁶.

Macd. My children too?

Rosse. Wife, children, servants, all
That could be found.

²⁴ 'Or is it a *fee-grief*,' a peculiar sorrow, a grief that hath but a single owner. So in a *Lover's Complaint*:—

'My woeful self that did in freedom stand,
And was my own *fee-simple*.'

In these singular passages Steevens remarks that 'the attorney has been guilty of a flat trespass on the poet.'

²⁵ *Quarry*, the game after it is killed: it is a term used both in hunting and falconry. The old English term *querre* is used for the square spot wherein the dead game was deposited. *Quarry* is also used for the game pursued.

²⁶ 'Curæ leves loquuntur, ingentes stupent.'

'Those are killing griefs which dare not speak.'

Vittoria Corombona.

'Light sorrows often speake,

When great, the heart in silence breake.'

Greene's *Tragical History of Faire Bellora*.

'Striving to tell his woes, words would not come,

For light cares speak, when mighty griefs are dombé.'

Daniel's *Complaint of Rosamond*.

Macd. And I must be from thence!
My wife kill'd to?

Rosse. I have said..

Mal. Be comforted:
Let's make us med'cines of our great revenge,
To cure this deadly grief.

Macd. He has no children.—All my pretty ones?
Did you say, all?—O, hell-kite!—All?
What, all my pretty chickens, and their dam,
At one fell swoop²⁷?

Mal. Dispute it like a man²⁸.

Macd. I shall do so;
But I must also feel it as a man:
I cannot but remember such things were,
That were most precious to me.—Did heaven look on,
And would not take their part? Sinful Macduff,
They were all struck for thee! naught that I am,
Not for their own demerits, but for mine,
Fell slaughter on their souls; Heaven rest them now!

Mal. Be this the whetstone of your sword: let
grief
Convert to anger; blunt not the heart, enrage it.

Macd. O, I could play the woman with mine eyes,
And braggart with my tongue!——But, gentle hea-
vens,

Cut short all intermission²⁹: front to front,
Bring thou this fiend of Scotland, and myself;
Within my sword's length set him; if he 'scape,
Heaven forgive him too!

Mal. This tune³⁰ goes manly.
Come, go we to the king: our power is ready;

²⁷ 'At one fell swoop.' *Swoop*, from the verb *to swoop* or *sweep*, is the descent of a bird of prey on his quarry. So in the *White Devil*, 1612:—

'That she may take away all at one swoop.'

²⁸ i. e. contend with your present sorrow like a man. Thus in *Twelfth Night*, Act iv. Sc. 3:—

'For though my soul disputes well with my sense.'

²⁹ All intermission, all pause, all intervening time.

³⁰ The old copy reads *time*. The emendation is Rowe's.

Our lack is nothing but our leave: Macbeth
Is ripe for shaking, and the powers above
Put on their instruments³¹. Receive what cheer
you may;
The night is long that never finds the day. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT V.

SCENE I. Dunsinane. *A Room in the Castle.*

*Enter a Doctor of Physic, and a waiting
Gentlewoman.*

Doct. I have two nights watched with you, but
can perceive no truth in your report. When was it
she last walked?

Gent. Since his majesty went into the field, I
have seen her rise from her bed, throw her night-
gown upon her, unlock her closet, take forth paper,
fold it, write upon it, read it, afterwards seal it, and
again return to bed; yet all this while in a most
fast sleep.

Doct. A great perturbation in nature! to receive
at once the benefit of sleep, and do the effects of
watching.—In this slumbry agitation, besides her
walking, and other actual performances, what, at
any time, have you heard her say?

Gent. That, sir, which I will not report after her.

Doct. You may, to me; and 'tis most meet you
should.

Gent. Neither to you, nor any one; having no
witness to confirm my speech.

Enter LADY MACBETH, with a Taper.

Lo you, here she comes! This is her very guise;
and upon my life, fast asleep. Observe her; stand
close.

³¹ i. e. encourage, thrust *us* their instruments forward against
the tyrant.

Doct. How came she by that light?

Gent. Why, it stood by her: she has light by her continually; 'tis her command.

Doct. You see her eyes are open.

Gent. Ay, but their sense is shut¹.

Doct. What is it she does now? Look, how she rubs her hands.

Gent. It is an accustomed action with her, to seem thus washing her hands; I have known her continue in this a quarter of an hour.

Lady M. Yet here's a spot.

Doct. Hark, she speaks: I will set down what comes from her, to satisfy remembrance the more strongly.

Lady M. Out, damned spot! out, I say!—One: Two: Why, then 'tis time to do't:—Hell is murky²!—Fye, my lord, fye! a soldier, and afeard? What need we fear who knows it, when none can call our power to account?—Yet who would have thought the old man to have had so much blood in him?

Doct. Do you mark that?

Lady M. The thane of Fife had a wife: Where is she now?—What, will these hands ne'er be clean?—No more o'that, my lord, no more o'that: you mar all with this starting³.

¹ 'Ay, but their sense is shut.' The old copy reads 'Ay, but their sense are shut.' Malone has quoted other instances of the same inaccurate grammar, according to modern notions, from Julius Caesar:—

'The posture of his blows are yet unknown.'

And from the hundred and twelfth Sonnet of Shakspeare:—

'In so profound abysm I throw all care

Of others' voices, that my adder's sense

To critic and to flatterer stopped are.'

Vide note on Hamlet, Act i. Sc. 1.

² Lady Macbeth, in her dream, imagines herself talking to her husband, who (she supposes) had just said *Hell is murky* (i. e. hell is a dismal place to go to in consequence of such a deed), and repeats his words in contempt of his cowardice.—'Hell is murky!—Fye, my lord, fye! a soldier, and afeard?' This explanation is by Steevens, and appears to me very judicious.

³ 'You mar all with this starting.' She is here again alluding to the terrors of Macbeth when the Ghost broke in on the festivity of the banquet.

Doct. Go to, go to; you have known what you should not.

Gent. She has spoke what she should not, I am sure of that: Heaven knows what she has known.

Lady M. Here's the smell of the blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh! oh! oh!

Doct. What a sigh is there! The heart is sorely charged.

Gent. I would not have such a heart in my bosom, for the dignity of the whole body.

Doct. Well, well, well,—

Gent. Pray God, it be, sir.

Doct. This disease is beyond my practice: Yet I have known those which have walked in their sleep, who have died holily in their beds.

Lady M. Wash your hands, put on your night-gown; look not so pale:—I tell you yet again, Banquo's buried; he cannot come out of his grave.

Doct. Even so?

Lady M. To bed, to bed; there's knocking at the gate. Come, come, come, come, give me your hand; What's done, cannot be undone: To bed, to bed, to bed. [Exit LADY MACBETH.

Doct. Will she go now to bed?

Gent. Directly.

Doct. Foul whisperings are abroad; Unnatural deeds

Do breed unnatural troubles: Infected minds
To their deaf pillows will discharge their secrets.
More needs she the divine, than the physician.—
God, God, forgive us all! Look after her;
Remove from her the means of all annoyance,
And still keep eyes upon her:—So, good night:
My mind she has mated⁴, and amaz'd my sight:
I think, but dare not speak.

Gent.

Good night, good doctor.

[Exeunt.

⁴ 'My mind she has mated.' Mated, or amated, from *matte*, old French, signified to overcome, confound, dismay, or make

SCENE II. *The Country near Dunsinane.*

*Enter, with Drum and Colours, MENTETH, CATH-
NESS, ANGUS, LENOX and Soldiers.*

Ment. The English power is near, led on by
Malcolm,

His uncle Siward⁴, and the good Macduff.
Revenge burn in them: for their dear causes
Would, to the bleeding, and the grim alarm,
Excite the mortified man².

Ang. Near Birnam wood
Shall we well meet them; that way are they coming.

Cath. Who knows, if Donalbain be with his brother?

Len. For certain, sir, he is not: I have a file
Of all the gentry; there is Siward's son,
And many unrough³ youths, that even now
Protest their first of manhood.

Ment. What does the tyrant?

Cath. Great Dunsinane he strongly fortifies:
Some say, he's mad; others, that lesser hate him,
Do call it valiant fury: but, for certain,
He cannot buckle his distemper'd cause
Within the belt of rule.

Ang. Now does he feel

afraid. The word is to be found in Bullokar's Expositor, 1616: in Cotgrave's French Dictionary; and in Philips' World of Words. Philips distinguishes it as an *old word*, or obsolete; and derives it from the Saxon; but, I believe, without foundation.

¹ Duncan had two sons by his wife, who was the daughter of Siward, Earl of Northumberland. HOLINSHED.

² By *the mortified man* is meant a *religious man*; one who has mortified his passions, is dead to the world, has abandoned it, and all the affairs of it; an *ascetic*. So in Monsieur D'Olive, 1606:

'He like a *mortified* hermit sits.'

And in Love's Labour's Lost, Act i. Sc. 1:—

'My loving lord, Dumain is *mortified*;

The grosser manner of this world's delights

He throws upon the gross world's baser slaves.'

³ 'And many unrough youths.' This old expression means *smooth-faced, unbearded*. See the Tempest:—

'———till new born chins

Be rough and razorable.

His secret murders sticking on his hands;
 Now minutely revolts upbraid his faith-breach;
 Those he commands, move only in command,
 Nothing in love: now does he feel his title
 Hang loose about him, like a giant's robe
 Upon a dwarfish thief.

Ment. Who then shall blame
 His pester'd senses to recoil, and start,
 When all that is within him does condemn
 Itself, for being there⁴!

Cath. Well, march we on,
 To give obedience where 'tis truly ow'd:
 Meet we the medecin⁵ of the sickly weal;
 And with him pour we, in our country's purge,
 Each drop of us.

Len. Or so much as it needs,
 To dew the sovereign flower, and drown the weeds.
 Make we our march towards Birnam.

[*Exeunt, marching.*]

SCENE III. Dunsinane. *A Room in the Castle.*

Enter MACBETH, Doctor, and Attendants.

Macb. Bring me no more reports; let them fly all!
 Till Birnam wood remove to Dunsinane,
 I cannot taint with fear. What's the boy Malcolm;
 Was he not born of woman? The spirits that know
 All mortal consequence, have pronounc'd me thus:
*Fear not, Macbeth; no man, that's born of woman,
 Shall e'er have power upon thee.*——Then fly, false
 thanes,
 And mingle with the English epicures¹:

⁴ i. e. when all the faculties of the mind are employed in self-condemnation.

⁵ *The medecin*, the physician. In the *Winter's Tale*, Camillo is called by Perdita 'the *medecin* of our house.'

¹ Shakspeare derived this thought from Holinshed:—'The Scottish people before had no knowledge nor understanding of fine fare or riotous surfeit; yet after they had once tasted the sweet poisoned bait thereof,' &c. 'those superfluities which came into the realme of Scotland with Englishmen.'—*Hist. of Scotland*, p. 179.

'The mind I sway by, and the heart I bear,
Shall never sagg² with doubt, nor shake with fear.

Enter a Servant.

The devil damn thee black, thou cream-fac'd loon³!
Where gott'st thou that goose look?

Serv. There is ten thousand——

Macb. Geese, villain?

Serv. Soldiers, sir.

Macb. Go, prick thy face, and over-red thy fear,
Thou lily-liver'd boy. What soldiers, patch⁴?
Death of thy soul! those linen cheeks of thine
Are counsellors to fear⁵. What soldiers, whey-face?

Serv. The English force, so please you.

Macb. Take thy face hence.—Seyton!—I am sick
at heart,

When I behold—Seyton, I say!—This push
Will cheer me ever, or disseat me now.
I have liv'd long enough: my way of life
Is fall'n into the sear⁶, the yellow leaf:

² To *sag*, or *swag*, is to hang down by its own weight, or by an overload.

³ '——cream-fac'd loon.' This word, which signifies a *base abject fellow*, is now only used in Scotland; it was formerly common in England, but spelt *lown*, and is justly considered by Horne Tooke as the past participle of *to low* or *abase*. *Lowt* has the same origin.

⁴ *Patch*, an appellation of contempt, signifying *fool* or *low wretch*.

⁵ i. e. they infect others who see them with cowardice. In King Henry V. the King says to the conspirators, 'Your cheeks are paper.'

⁶ *Sear* is *dry*, *withered*. We have the same expression and sentiment in Spenser's Pastorals:—

'Also my lustful leaf is *drie* and *seare*.'

For 'way of life' Johnson would read 'May of life; in which he was followed by Steevens and others. Warburton contended for the original reading, and was followed by Mason. At a subsequent period Steevens acquiesced in the propriety of the old reading, *way of life*, which he interprets, with his predecessors, *course* or *progress*. Malone followed the same track. The fact is that these ingenious writers have mistaken the phrase, which is neither more nor less than a simple paraphrasis for *life*. A few examples will make this clear:—

'If that when I was mistress of myself,

And in my way of youth clear and untainted.'

Massinger's Roman Actor.

And that which should accompany old age,
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have; but, in their stead,
Curses, not loud, but deep, mouth-honour, breath,
Which the poor heart would fain deny, but dare
not.

Seyton!—

Enter SEYTON.

Sey. What is your gracious pleasure?

Macb. What news more?

Sey. All is confirm'd, my lord, which was reported.

Macb. I'll fight, till from my bones my flesh be
hack'd.

Give me my armour.

Sey. 'Tis not needed yet.

Macb. I'll put it on.

Send out more horses, skirr⁷ the country round;

'In way of youth I did enjoy one friend.'

A very Woman.

i. e. in my youth.

'So much nobler

Shall be your way of justice.' *Thierry and Theodoret.*

i. e. your justice.

*'He shall be found, and such a way of justice inflicted
on him?'*

Queen of Corinth.

i. e. such justice.

*'Thus ready for the way of life or death,
I wait the sharpest blow.'*

Pericles.

i. e. for life or death.

'——Is there no other way of mercy,

But I must needs to the Tower?' *King Henry VIII.*

This note I have abridged from Mr. Gifford's edition of Massinger, vol. iv. p. 309. 'I should have been contented with fewer examples (says that excellent critic), had not my respect for Shakspeare made me desirous of disencumbering his page, by ascertaining beyond the possibility of cavil the meaning of an expression so long and so laboriously agitated. To return to Macbeth: *the sere and yellow leaf* is the commencement of the winter of life or of old age; to this he has attained, and he laments, in a strain of inimitable pathos and beauty, that it is unaccompanied by those blessings which render it supportable. As his manhood was without virtue, so he has now before him the certain prospect of an old age without honour.'

⁷ i. e. scour the country round.

Hang those that talk of fear.—Give me mine armour.
How does your patient, doctor?

Doct. Not so sick, my lord,
As she is troubled with thick-coming fancies,
That keep her from her rest.

Macb. Cure her of that:
Canst thou not minister to a mind diseas'd⁸;
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow;
Raze out the written troubles of the brain;
And, with some sweet oblivious antidote,
Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff,
Which weighs upon the heart?

Doct. Therein the patient
Must minister to himself.

Macb. Throw physic to the dogs, I'll none of it:—
Come, put mine armour on; give me my staff:—
Seyton, send out.—Doctor, the thanes fly from me:
Come, sir, despatch:—If thou couldst, doctor, cast
The water of my land⁹, find her disease,
And purge it to a sound and pristine health,
I would applaud thee to the very echo,
That should applaud again.—Pull't off, I say.—
What rhubarb, senna¹⁰, or what purgative drug,
Would scour these English hence?—Hearest thou
of them?

Doct. Ay, my good lord; your royal preparation
Makes us hear something.

Macb. Bring it after me.—
I will not be afraid of death and bane,
Till Birnam forest come to Dunsinane. [*Exit.*

⁸ The following very remarkable passage in the *Amadigi* of Bernardo Tasso, which bears a striking resemblance to the words of Macbeth, was first pointed out in Mr. Weber's edition of Ford:—

‘Ma chi puote con erbe, od argomenti
Guarir l'infermità del intelletto?’

Cant. xxxvi. *St.* 37.

⁹ To cast the water was the empiric phrase for finding out disorders by the inspection of urine.

¹⁰ ‘What rhubarb, senna.’ The old copy reads *cyme*. The emendation is Rowe's.

Doct. Were I from Dunsinane away and clear,
Profit again should hardly draw me here. [*Exit.*]

SCENE IV.

Country near Dunsinane: A Wood in view.

Enter, with Drum and Colours, MALCOLM, old SIWARD and his Son, MACDUFF, MENTETH, CATHNESS, ANGUS, LENOX, ROSSE, and Soldiers, marching.

Mal. Cousins, I hope the days are near at hand
That chambers will be safe.

Ment. We doubt it nothing.

Siw. What wood is this before us?

Ment. The wood of Birnam.

Mal. Let every soldier hew him down a bough¹,
And bear't before him; thereby shall we shadow
The numbers of our host, and make discovery
Err in report of us.

Sold. It shall be done.

Siw. We learn no other, but the confident tyrant
Keeps still in Dunsinane, and will endure
Our setting down before't.

Mal. 'Tis his main hope:
For where there is advantage to be given²,
Both more and less³ have given him the revolt;
And none serve with him but constrained things,
Whose hearts are absent too.

Macb. Let our just censures
Attend the true event, and put we on
Industrious soldiership.

¹ A similar incident is recorded by Olaus Magnus, in his Northern History, lib. vii. cap. xx. De Strategemate Hachonis per Frondes.

² 'For where there is advantage to be given.' Dr. Johnson thought that we should read:—

'—where there is a vantage to be gone.'
i. e. when there is an opportunity to be gone, all ranks desert him. We might perhaps read:—

'—where there is advantage to be gained.'
and the sense would be nearly similar, with less violence to the text of the old copy.

³ i. e. Greater and less, or high and low, those of all ranks.

Siw. The time approaches,
That will with due decision make us know
What we shall say we have, and what we owe⁴.
Thoughts speculative their unsure hopes relate;
But certain issue strokes must arbitrate⁵:
Towards which, advance the war⁶.

[*Exeunt, marching.*]

SCENE V. Dunsinane. *Within the Castle.*

*Enter, with Drums and Colours, MACBETH, SEYTON,
and Soldiers.*

Macb. Hang out our banners on the outward
walls;
The cry is still, *They come*: Our castle's strength
Will laugh a siege to scorn: here let them lie,
Till famine, and the ague, eat them up:
Were they not forc'd with those that should be
ours,
We might have met them dareful, beard to beard,
And beat them backward home. What is that
noise?

[*A cry within, of women.*]

Sey. It is the cry of women, my good lord.

Macb. I have almost forgot the taste of fears:
The time has been, my senses would have cool'd
To hear a night-shriek; and my fell¹ of hair

⁴ 'What we shall say we have, and what we owe.' I think, with Mason, that Siward only means to say, in more pompous language, that the time approached which was to decide their fate.

⁵ *Arbitrate*, determine.

⁶ It has been understood that local rhymes were introduced in plays to afford an actor the advantage of a more pointed exit, or to close the scene with additional force. Yet, whatever might be Shakspeare's motive for continuing such a practice, he often seems immediately to repent of it; and in this tragedy, as in other places, has repeatedly counteracted it by hemistichs, which destroy the effect, and defeat the supposed purpose of the antecedent couplets.

¹ '—my fell of hair,' my hairy part, my *capillitium*. *Fell* is skin, properly a sheep's skin with the wool on it. Thus in *King Lear*:—

'The gougères shall devour them flesh and fell.'
A fell-monger is still the denomination of a dealer in hides.

Would at a dismal treatise rouse, and stir
As life were in't: I have supp'd full with horrors;
Direness, familiar to my slaught'rous thoughts,
Cannot once start me.—Wherefore was that cry?

Sey. The queen, my lord, is dead.

Macb. She should have died hereafter;
There would have been a time for such a word².—
To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time³;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.—

Enter a Messenger.

Thou com'st to use thy tongue; thy story quickly.

Mess. Gracious my lord,
I shall report that which I say I saw,
But know not how to do it.

Macb. Well, say, sir.

Mess. As I did stand my watch upon the hill,
I look'd toward Birnam, and anon, methought,
The wood began to move.

Macb. Liar and slave⁴!

² 'There would have been a time for such a word.' Macbeth might mean that there would have been a more convenient *time* for such a *word*, for such *intelligence*. By a *word* certainly more than a single one was meant. Thus in King Richard II.:—

'The hopeless word of, never to return,
Breathe I against thee.'

Un mot sometimes means a *sentence* also in French: and we still say 'word was brought' when *intelligence* is meant.

³ 'The last syllable of recorded time' seems to signify the utmost period fixed in the decrees of heaven for the period of life. 'The record of futurity' is indeed no accurate expression; but as we only know transactions, past or present, the language of men affords no term for the volumes of prescience in which future events may be supposed to be written.

⁴ '[Striking him]' says the stage direction in the margin of all the modern editions; but this stage direction is not in the old copies: it was first interpolated by Rowe; and is now omitted on the suggestion of the late Mr. Kemble. See his Essay on Macbeth and King Richard III. Lond. 1817, p. 111.

Mess. Let me endure your wrath, if't be not so:
Within this three mile may you see it coming;
I say, a moving grove.

Macb. If thou speak'st false,
Upon the next tree shalt thou hang alive,
Till famine cling⁵ thee: if thy speech be sooth,
I care not if thou dost for me as much.—
I pull in resolution; and begin
To doubt the equivocation of the fiend,
That lies like truth: *Fear not, till Birnam wood*
Do come to Dunsinane;—and now a wood
Comes toward Dunsinane.—Arm, arm, and out!—
If this, which he avouches, does appear,
There is nor flying hence, nor tarrying here.
I 'gin to be a-weary of the sun,
And wish the estate o' the world were now undone.—
Ring the alarum-bell:—Blow, wind! come, wrack!
At least we'll die with harness⁶ on our back.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI.

The same. A Plain before the Castle.

Enter, with Drums and Colours, MALCOLM, old
SIWARD, MACDUFF, &c. and their Army, with
Boughs.

Mal. Now near enough; your leavy screens throw
down,
And show like those you are:—You, worthy uncle,
Shall, with my cousin, your right noble son,
Lead our first battle: worthy Macduff, and we,

⁵ To *cling*, in the northern counties, signifies to shrivel, wither, or dry up. *Clung-wood* is wood of which the sap is entirely dried or spent. The same idea is well expressed by Pope in his version of the nineteenth Iliad, 166:—

'Clung with dry famine, and with toils declin'd.

⁶ *Harness*, armour.

Shall take upon us⁷ what else remains to do,
According to our order.

Siw. Fare you well.—
Do we but find the tyrant's power to-night,
Let us be beaten, if we cannot fight.

Macd. Make all our trumpets speak; give them
all breath,
Those clamorous harbingers of blood and death.

[*Exeunt. Alarums continued.*]

SCENE VII.

The same. Another Part of the Plain.

Enter MACBETH.

Macb. They have tied me to a stake; I cannot fly,
But, bearlike, I must fight the course¹.—What's he,
That was not born of woman? Such a one
Am I to fear, or none.

Enter young SIWARD.

Yo. Siw. What is thy name?

Macb. Thou'lt be afraid to hear it.

Yo. Siw. No; though thou call'st thyself a hotter
name

Than any is in hell.

Macb. My name's Macbeth.

Yo. Siw. The devil himself could not pronounce
a title

More hateful to mine ear.

Macb. No, nor more fearful.

Yo. Siw. Thou liest, abhorred tyrant; with my
sword

I'll prove the lie thou speak'st.

[*They fight, and young Siward is slain.*]

⁷ The first folio reads *upon's*.

¹ 'But, bearlike, I must fight the course.' This was a phrase at bear-baiting. 'Also you shall see two ten dog courses at the great bear.'—*Antipodes*, by Brome.

Macb. Thou wast born of woman.—
But swords I smile at, weapons laugh to scorn,
Brandish'd by man that's of a woman born. [*Exit.*

Alarums. Enter MACDUFF.

Macd. That way the noise is:—Tyrant, show thy face:

If thou be'st slain, and with no stroke of mine,
My wife and children's ghosts will haunt me still.
I cannot strike at wretched kernes, whose arms
Are hir'd to bear their staves; either thou, Macbeth,
Or else my sword, with an unbatter'd edge,
I sheathe again undeeded. There thou shouldst be;
By this great clatter, one of greatest note
Seems bruited²: Let me find him, fortune!
And more I beg not. [*Exit. Alarum.*

Enter MALCOLM and old SIWARD.

Siw. This way, my lord;—the castle's gently
render'd:

The tyrant's people on both sides do fight;
The noble thanes do bravely in the war;
The day almost itself professes yours,
And little is to do.

Mal. We have met with foes
That strike beside us.

Siw. Enter, sir, the castle.

[*Exeunt. Alarum.*

Re-enter MACBETH.

Macb. Why should I play the Roman fool, and
die³

² *Bruited* is reported, noised abroad; from *bruit*, Fr. So in King Henry IV. Part II.:—

‘——his death

Being bruited once,’ &c.

Any noise or report is called a *brute* by the writers of Shakspeare's age. Thus Baret:—‘False brutes or reportes. Falsae voculae.—The brute or common reporte was in old time,’ &c.

³ ‘Why should I play the Roman fool, and die.’ Alluding probably to the suicide of Cato of Utica. The circumstance is mentioned again in Julius Caesar:—

‘I did blame Cato for the death
Which he did give himself.’

On mine own sword? whiles I see lives, the gashes
Do better upon them.

Re-enter MACDUFF.

Macd. Turn, hell-hound, turn.

Macb. Of all men else I have avoided thee:
But get thee back, my soul is too much charg'd
With blood of thine already.

Macd. I have no words,
My voice is in my sword⁴; thou bloodier villain
Than terms can give thee out! [*They fight.*

Macb. Thou lovest labour:
As easy mayst thou the intrenchant air⁵
With thy keen sword impress, as make me bleed:
Let fall thy blade on vulnerable crests;
I bear a charmed life⁶, which must not yield
To one of woman born.

Macd. Despair thy charm;
And let the angel, whom thou still hast serv'd,
Tell thee, Macduff was from his mother's womb
Untimely ripp'd.

Macb. Accursed be that tongue that tells me so,
For it hath cow'd my better part of man:
And be these juggling fiends no more believ'd,
That palter⁷ with us in a double sense;

⁴ 'My voice is in my sword.' Thus Casca, in Julius Caesar:—
'Speak, hands, for me.'

⁵ 'The intrenchant air,' the air which cannot be cut. So in Hamlet:—

'For it is as the air invulnerable.'

⁶ 'I bear a charmed life.' In the days of chivalry, the champion's arms being ceremoniously blessed, each took an oath that he used no *charmed* weapons. Macbeth, in allusion to this custom, tells Macduff of the security he had in the prediction of the spirit. To this likewise Posthumus alludes in Cymbeline, Act v.:—

'—I, in mine own woe *charm'd*,
Could not find death.'

Again in Spenser's Faerie Queene, b. i. c. 4:—

'—he bears a *charmed* shield,
And eke enchanted arms, that none can pierce.'

⁷ 'That palter with us in a double sense.' That *shuffle* with ambiguous expressions.

That keep the word of promise to our ear,
And break it to our hope.—I'll not fight with thee.

Macd. Then yield thee, coward,
And live to be the show and gaze o'the time.
We'll have thee, as our rarer monsters are,
Painted upon a pole; and underwrit,
Here may you see the tyrant.

Macb. I'll not yield,
To kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet,
And to be baited with the rabble's curse.
Though Birnam wood be come to Dunsinane,
And thou oppos'd, being of no woman born,
Yet I will try the last: Before my body
I throw my warlike shield; lay on, Macduff;
And damn'd be him that first cries, *Hold, enough*^s.
[*Exeunt, fighting.*

Retreat. Flourish. Re-enter, with Drum and Colours, MALCOLM, old SIWARD, ROSSE, LENOX, ANGUS, CATHNESS, MENTETH, and Soldiers.

Mal. I would, the friends we miss were safe arriv'd.

Siw. Some must go off: and yet, by these I see,
So great a day as this is cheaply bought.

Mal. Macduff is missing, and your noble son.

Rosse. Your son, my lord, has paid a soldier's debt;
He only liv'd but till he was a man:
The which no sooner had his prowess confirm'd
In the unshrinking station where he fought,
But like a man he died.

^s To cry *hold*! was the word of yielding (according to Carew's Survey of Cornwall, p. 74), that is, when one of the combatants cries so. To cry *hold*! when persons were fighting, was an authoritative way of separating them, according to the old military laws. This is shown by the following passage produced by Mr. Tollet: it declares it to be a capital offence 'Whosoever shall strike stroke at his adversary, either in the heat or otherwise, if a third do cry *hold*, to the intent to part them.'

Belley's Instructions for the Wars, 1599.

^s illustrates the passage in Act i. Sc. 5. of this play:—

'Nor heav'n peep through the blanket of the dark
To cry *Hold! hold!*

Siw. Then he is dead?

Rosse. Ay, and brought off the field: your cause
of sorrow

Must not be measur'd by his worth, for then
It hath no end.

Siw. Had he his hurts before?

Rosse. Ay, on the front.

Siw. Why then, God's soldier be he!
Had I as many sons as I have hairs,
I would not wish them to a fairer death⁹:
And so his knell is knoll'd.

Mal. He's worth more sorrow,
And that I'll spend for him.

Siw. He's worth no more;
They say, he parted well, and paid his score:
And so, God be with him!—Here comes newer
comfort.

*Re-enter MACDUFF, with MACBETH's Head on
a Pole*¹⁰.

Macb. Hail, king! for so thou art: Behold, where
stands

The usurper's cursed head: the time is free:
I see thee compass'd with thy kingdom's pearl¹¹,
That speak my salutation in their minds;
Whose voices I desire aloud with mine,—
Hail, king of Scotland!

All.

Hail, king of Scotland!
[*Flourish.*]

⁹ 'When Siward, the martial Earl of Northumberland, understood that his son, whom he had sent against the Scotchmen, was slain, he demanded whether his wounds were in the fore part or hinder part o his body. When it was answered, "in the fore part;" he replied, "*I am right glad; neither wish I any other death to me or mine.*"'—*Camden's Remaines.*

The same incident is recorded by Holinshed, vol. i. p. 192.

¹⁰ These words, '*on a pole,*' Mr. Steevens added to the stage direction from the Chronicle. The stage directions of the players are often incorrect, and sometimes ludicrous.

¹¹ '*Thy kingdom's pearl,*' thy kingdom's wealth or ornament. Rowe altered this to *peers*, without authority.

Mal. We shall not spend a large expense¹² of time,
 Before we reckon with your several loves,
 And make us even with you. My thanes and kinsmen,
 Henceforth be earls, the first that ever Scotland
 In such an honour nam'd¹³. What's more to do,
 Which would he planted newly with the time,—
 As calling home our exil'd friends abroad,
 That fled the snares of watchful tyranny;
 Producing forth the cruel ministers
 Of this dead butcher, and his fiendlike queen;
 Who, as 'tis thought, by self and violent hands
 Took off her life;—This, and what needful else
 That calls upon us, by the grace of Grace,
 We will perform in measure, time, and place:
 So thanks to all at once, and to each one,
 Whom we invite to see us crown'd at Scone.

[*Flourish. Exeunt.*]

¹² To *spend* an *expense* of time is, it is true, an awkward expression, yet it is probably correct; for, in the Comedy of Errors, Act iii. Sc. 1, Antipholus of Ephesus says 'This jest shall *cost* me some *expense*.'

¹³ 'Malcolm, immediately after his coronation, called a parliament at Forfair; in the which he rewarded them with lands and livings that had assisted him against Macbeth. Manie of them that were before *thanes* were at this time made *earles*; as Fife, Menteith, Atholl, Levenox, Murrey, Caithness, Rosse, and Angus.'—*Holinshed's History of Scotland*, p. 176.

THIS play is deservedly celebrated for the propriety of its fictions, and solemnity, grandeur, and variety of its action; but it has no nice discriminations of character: the events are too great to admit the influence of particular dispositions, and the course of the action necessarily determines the conduct of the agents.

The danger of ambition is well described; and I know not whether it may not be said, in defence of some parts which now seem improbable, that in Shakspeare's time it was necessary to warn credulity against vain and illusive predictions.

The passions are directed to their true end. Lady Macbeth is merely detested; and though the courage of Macbeth preserves some esteem, yet every reader rejoices at his fall.

JOHNSON.



Shakespeare, William,

William Shakspeare's Macbeth drama in five acts

Halle a.S. [1842]

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